

The Beat Within



THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 12.37



Another editor's note to create with very little time to waste. Welcome back you faithful readers of this editor's note, seems like yesterday we were saying hello to you. Ha! Truthfully, we wonder how many of you actually take the few plus minutes to read our weekly rants? Well, at least one of you reads it, and that's all that matters. Thanks for returning to page 2 of this amazing publication before you dive into this deep text heavy in your face rag!

Here we are in the last couple months of 2007, so hard to believe. Where did the time go? Issue 12.37 has everything you can imagine and then some. We hope if you wrote, your piece is featured when it is suppose to, if not, well, there's next week's issue, right? Unfortunately for the workshop writings it has been some time since we have been able to include all the workshops that participated. Unfortunately there's plenty of workshops - close to 50! Then there's the typing, editing and responding, and in the end it seems at least two or three units are left out.

To us editors, we are not only blown away how powerful this publication has become, but how many of you step up and write for the readers of The Beat Within, as well as yourself each week. The power of writing is alive and on fire in the many correctional facilities we touch. It is simply incredible that we go into these facilities empty-handed each week, and walk out with pages upon pages of writings. We get writings in all shapes and sizes, as most of you know. What inspires us facilitators/editors is the courage and hunger you writers have to share your thoughts for yourself and for us curious readers who read the weekly Beat with an open mind.

Writing isn't easy, or is it? Many of us facilitators (not all) remember dwelling in having to write when we were in high school? Did that happen to you? Sure, we wrote, but most times it felt like we were truly b-sing our teachers with winded and not very thoughtful pieces. Yet, we think if we were in your shoes, how we too would thrive on The Beat topics we suggest each week, as many of you do. So what is it about writing in this weekly? What is it about having your pieces read by other detainees? What is it about writing and either keeping it real or b-sing a bit to make for an exciting piece? We suppose the writing has a lot to do with topics that hit home and mean something to you as well.

Regardless, to have the courage to pick up a pencil and write on a blank piece of lined paper says a lot about this program and the trust you have in telling your story, knowing that you will at best get a response "From The Beat," or worse not get published at all because you wrote a hateful or incriminating piece. But the fact of the matter is, given how much pressure you already have in your life and how chaotic the institution is because of other detainees or unfortunately poor counselors, you find the space to tell us a little, something-something. To give us a glimpse into your life speaks volumes, when we hear from other professionals in the field that have a hard time in getting anything out of many of you young writers, shoot, all we do is show up each week and in the end look what we have! Yes, thoughtful contributions!

Well, we are honored to listen to you and read the pieces that you submit. That's the reason we show up weekly with topics, listening ears and the latest Beat.

It's not only this editor that has a thought or two about writing, there's also colleague Will Roy, who we asked to share a few hundred plus words with you readers as well. Will...!

Yeah, I can definitely attest to how powerful writing is, especially in a time when we're being told, either boldly or inadvertently, that what we have to say doesn't matter. That as long as we don't have college degrees or haven't studied anything in particular besides the streets, our words will never be credible. And even when we get out and attempt to relay our experiences to the masses, we're constantly overshadowed by experts who don't know one thing about how it feels to be incarcerated. Could they even imagine how painful it is to watch the seasons change while being locked in a cage? Could they fathom a holiday without their loved ones, let alone all the holidays year 'round? We aren't credible in this land of titles, where a mere name could get you a slap on the wrist or life in prison, depending on what

that name is. And yet, The Beat Within still flourishes.

Why? Because each and every one of us has been through enough to fill a book, a publication, a poem. We are our own feature films and many people would like to take credit for when we do something positive. We thrive on capitalism in this country. And those that have never been through much heartache and pain, use our heartache and pain to survive. Where would the judges, lawyers, probation officers, youth counselors, correctional officers, police, court recorders, wardens, and even staff at The Beat Within be if we weren't getting locked up... probably doing something to get themselves locked up because of too much idle time. But I'm losing track of my point.

Ah, yes, the power of writing... You young writers are the reason we have people wanting to volunteer from damn near every university in the Bay Area. You're the reason why we leave our own personal lives at the door to finally give an opportunity to someone else. Do you think this would be if all of you just flat out refused to write? Hell no... There would be no Beat Within. It is your thoughts, beliefs, imaginations, and experiences that allow us and you to keep going. You are your own feature film. One that should be displayed to more people than The Beat Within can reach. A film that would win Oscars if put in the right hands. Your words create images for us all every week and from those images we are inspired to keep listening. It's like a cycle that produces all the way around.

And from this cycle of production comes something as tangible as a 60 plus page publication every week where relationships are documented in all types of font, a publication where tears are shed and blood is bled. And I have been blessed to be a part of it since its early years. I have been blessed to meet people like Dave and Mike, who have had a passion to hear young people out even before I decided I wanted to be heard. People who've made it very clear that they have been blessed to know me. And on goes the cycle as I'm blessed to know each and everyone of you featured in The Beat through your writing. Your pain has made me cry, your happy moments have made me smile, but most of all just being you has taught me how to be a better me. There are many powers in the world today, but to me, the power of writing is one of the most tremendous ones.

The topics discussed this week leading up to the writing that fills the pages of this 12.37 issue were the very popular, "Why do people hate?" - It seems like everyone has experienced hate first-hand. Sometimes we are the ones being hated on, and sometimes we are the ones hating on others. What makes us hate? If you have felt the pain of hate directed at you, then why do you turn around and hate on someone else? There is a line in a song, that goes: "We've got to be taught, before it's too late, to hate all the people our relatives hate..." Is that true? Is hate something we learn from our families? Who is hurt more by hatred, the one who is hating or the one who that hate is directed at? Have you ever hated something or someone, and found a way to overcome your hatred? How did you do it? What advice would you give to those who hate?"

The second topic, "An act of courage" - Have you ever had to step into a situation that required an act of courage? Or, have you ever seen someone close to you who acted with courage? What did you (or they) do that qualifies as courageous? What makes an act of courage? Does it require risking your life, or can courage simply be standing up and speaking your mind sometimes? Were you surprised to find the inner strength to come through when you had to, or to see someone else you thought was weak act with great courage? Tell our Beat readers a story of your own courage, or one that you've witnessed.

Lastly, "An animal story" - What's your favorite animal story? Don't tell us any more about dog fighting - we've already dealt with that. We'd rather hear about something you've seen animals doing that surprised or even shocked you, or something that made you laugh. Have you ever learned anything from watching your own pets or animals in a zoo? What's the best animal story you know?

Knowing this, allow us to say as a circus ringmaster would say, on with the show!! We hope you enjoy this latest masterpiece of work. Read on, write on! This one goes out to all of you that care. Forget the haters!

The Beat Within, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

Spiritual Advisor: Jack Jacqua

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Writers: Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco, Maricopa County Arizona, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Bernalillio County New Mexico, Santa Cruz and Marin County Juvenile Halls. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415) 503-4170 or check us out at:

www.thebeatwithin.org

Editor's Note 2

CCYC 4

Project WHAT! 10

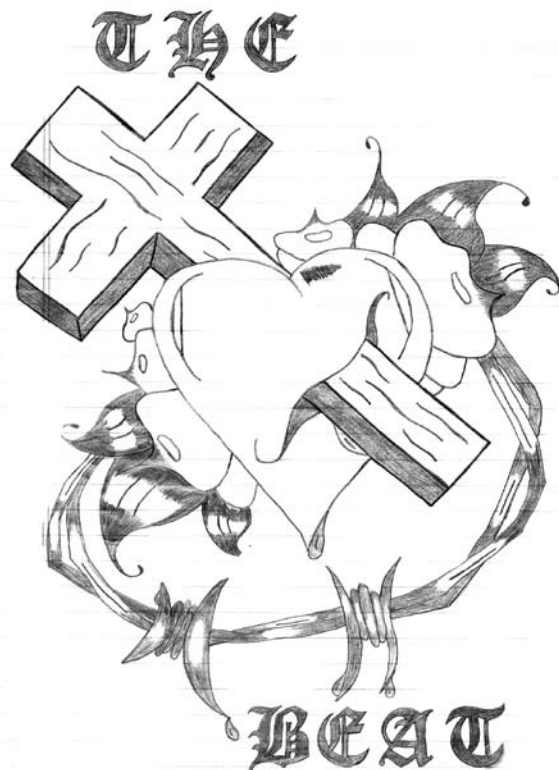
Pieces Of The Week 12

Go-Pieces Of The Week 16

Standouts 23

<i>Alameda</i>	23
<i>San Francisco</i>	34
<i>Santa Clara</i>	40
<i>Santa Cruz</i>	45
<i>Marin</i>	46
<i>New Mexico</i>	47
<i>Voices In Spanish</i>	48
<i>San Mateo</i>	49

The Beat Without 54



The California Council on Youth Relations Intro

In the Spring of 2007 the State Department of Mental Health came to us for help finding out what kinds of mental health services young people like, don't like, want, don't want, need, don't need... so The Beat's sister project "The California Council on Youth Relations" organized focus groups with young people in eight California cities to find out. At these focus groups, in addition to a long discussion and yummy dinner, was a Beat-inspired writing topic, "When I needed it most..." and in these Beat pages you can read their interesting and unique responses to that topic.

We are pleased to announce that our final report, which contained over 25 policy recommendations from young people, was rubber-stamp-approved by the head of the Department of Mental Health on October 2, 2007!

This was a groundbreaking partnership between a state agency and local CBOs to get youth input into policy decision making. We're including a summary of the major recommendations here, but you can read the whole report online at media.youthoutlook.org/ccyr.html. If you want to learn more about the project, feel free to contact Patricia Johnson at [HYPERLINK "mailto:pjohnson@newamericamedia.org"](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:pjohnson@newamericamedia.org) pjohnson@newamericamedia.org or by mail: 275 Ninth St, San Francisco, Ca 94103.

-Patricia Johnson, Development Director

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth Involvement – Getting young people involved in decision making efforts requires that location, schedules and communication style be geared toward young people's lifestyles. Especially to access the ideas of young people who have had mixed experiences with the system or grew up in poverty, financial compensation for attendance demonstrates the value of their time spent on this effort to improve services for the larger community.

Families as the Unit of Service – Participants felt that mental health services and support were needed for their whole family, not just them as individuals, if they were to succeed in staying healthy and achieving their goals. When young people are in group homes or incarcerated, families need the system to help siblings and parents stay connected.

Innovative Therapy – Participants repeatedly complained that schools and juvenile halls are understaffed with counselors, and that therapy and programs should be made available to young people before they get in trouble, not just after the fact. Concrete suggestions for building trust between therapists and youth clients include informing young people about their rights in dealing with the system, identifying a young person's survival needs as a starting point in therapy and monitoring strengths and goals, not just mistakes, in young people's case files.

From The Beat: What an incredible honor to include this initial installment from our good friends over at the CCYR (California Council on Youth Relations). There isn't much more we need to say except we are thrilled to include the following pieces from young people who met with CCYR and wrote from Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco responding to the question, "When I needed it most." By the way, check out our final installment from CCYR in next week's issue, until then, thank you Patricia Johnson and all your colleagues, particularly the young people who have the courage to keep it real.

No Medication without Communication – The overwhelming feedback about psychotropic medications is that young people are not getting good communication from doctors about their meds. They asked for more controls on dosages and checks and balances to make sure medications are treating the real problem, accompanied by talk therapy, and not being used to make young people's problems easier for adults to manage. Funds could be used for follow-up services after youth are released from detention or placement, to ensure they continue receiving care and don't turn to street drugs or self-destructive behavior.

Prepare Adults to Support & Respect Youth – Participants expressed concern that the adults taking care of them were not properly trained or supported in dealing with heavy emotions or trauma-induced behaviors. They suggested free therapy for staff, teachers, social workers, judges, case workers, foster parents and therapists working with stressed out young people; and more required trainings for staff and foster parents. They also wanted the system to provide more support for young people as adults change positions and move through their own careers, as well as supplementing therapy with mentorship programs that match young people with role models who have been through similar experiences.

A Place to Go, Something to Do – Participants in the focus groups repeatedly asked for youth centers and jobs that provide a safe environment and a sense of purpose. Participants asked that mental health funds be used for youth-driven recreational spaces that offer a chance to impact the community and support physical fitness. They also saw job training and placement as important to prevention of self-destructive behaviors caused by poverty, lack of purpose and too much free time.

Engage Stigma - Mental health providers face the dual challenge of social stigma about mental health combined with the distrust young people have for adults in positions of authority. Participants requested free or subsidized therapy or support groups for parents of children diagnosed with mental illness. And they felt hiring young people to do outreach at schools and CBOs about mental health resources, what therapy is like, support hot lines, etc., would empower youth to access resources.

To The Top

The life I lead is up to me
The past is the past, only the future I see
Don't tell me I'm nothing
Or going nowhere
I'm going somewhere
I'm going to the top
And I won't see you there

-Lyssa in Los Angeles

A Black Cloud

You weren't there. You were somewhere drinking a beer.
As I lay in bed crying all night a ghost in my window also cries. I look to my left, and a black cloud talks to me saying, "Wake up, mom and dad are not home, let's blow some dope." Five cats under my bed they give me peace.

-Crowder in San Francisco

There For Me

When I needed it the most nobody was there. Since I was 6 yrs old my Grandpa told me, "Mija, in this life you don't have anyone. There's no mom, there's no friends, the only person you truly have is yourself."

Coming in the foster care & mental health system I was told that I did have people. My therapist told me to trust her. My social worker said she was not like the others. My district Attorney looked like he was interested in me.

Everything changed when I turned 18 years old. All of a sudden I didn't have anyone. I found myself homeless. I didn't care any more; I was so lonely like I've never felt in my whole life.

I watched T.V., ate, went to work and school, but nobody called and nobody cared. All I remembered was what my grandfather said. That I only had myself. That day I decided that I was responsible for myself. No more blaming because I had a rat life and bad childhood, no more blaming to anyone. No more blaming my actions because I'm not going to therapy or taking my crazy meds. I decided to take action on my life; I would take responsibility for my own actions. It was up to me to go forward or down the hill.

When I need it the most nobody was there, just myself.

-Martha in Fresno

Faith In Myself

I felt like a ghost!

No one to talk to, no one to tell my sorrows to!

Looking 4 someone to understand me...

I feed on society!

Turning to methamphetamine to hold me ...

... It also deceived me!

Suddenly,

I've had enough

I won't give up.

Fighting my addictions and people's contradictions...

There is hope; there is a way to cope.

No dope, nope I'm NOT GIVING UP.

I see the light of opportunity shining on me!

When I need it most...

I found faith in myself!

-Sanjuanita in Fresno

Working For My Dream

All I gots to say is I know I been through a lot of stuff throughout my life. From drugs to guns. People abusing me, talking bad about me, praying for my down fall. Going from home to home and getting situated all over again in that foster home. And bad influences that taught me bad things, and me not getting caught because I know I is slick like dat.

When I see all these people with their nice cars and nice houses, nice jewelry on, all I do is say, "Man one of these days I am going have that dream car and dream house and jewelry." But I need to be doing something so I can reach those goals, and my past shouldn't be the excuse that stops me from getting to those dreams. All I gots to do is put in work, and I could do almost anything I put my mind on, man!!!! Life is a b, but it can change, and I'm willing to change and become a better person.

-James in Fresno

I Needed Love

I needed love.

Love to feel protected though I was already hurt.

I needed love when I was raped.

Though I was already scared with this pain.

I needed love the most when I was stuck in the system.

Stuck with worries, stuck all alone.

I needed the love, the love of a mother.

Love that every child needs.

I didn't have it, it wasn't there.

Now I'm 19 years old making it on my own,

I don't need it and I don't want it anymore.

I won't have it and don't want it.

I discovered a new love,

love that will never fade away,

the love of a brother that will always stay the same.

I need that now and that's an everyday love

that will help me when I need it the most.

-Stacy in Los Angeles

Where I Stand

When I needed it most the one most important thing to me was that the family all wanted me to succeed and become someone. They all believe in me, push me, enforce my life on me. I've always lived in a room of darkness, but this time they are my light to the way out. The one thing that I have realized through time is I am the only thing that stands in between where I am and where I want to be.

-Joseph in Los Angeles

What I Want

Don't you see me crying inside?

I'm slowly dying.

I've been beaten, raped and abused.

You're the adult,

Maybe you being a real dad will come through.

But people in hell want ice water too.

-April in Fresno

Changing The World

I couldn't tell you cause I didn't have a phone. I needed it the most when you saw me crying lying in bed. The next day I got out of bed, went to school facing a bad day. Can it be that it was my destiny? It's not a coincidence that I found my voice the day of my daughter's birthday.

Today was the last day to lay in bed to wake up sad ready for a bad day. Tomorrow I work to build the real world that my child will share, not only with me, but all society. I began a fight that enforces my rights and no one can tell me to sit back, shut up, and "Let me read you your rights." No I stand up and fight repping that streets on my back, yell the chant as I walk down 50 miles spitting out, "Shut down the CYA!"

Today is the last day that no soldier in my hood of LA bends down and prays without a homie by to say hi. For everyone locked up, this is your last day to say without a voice cause I pray. Your health is ready to be free even if your body can't be. Today is the day that we all ay fight back and shut down CYA.

-Noe in Los Angeles

Pray To The Streets

As I creep through the night, nowhere to be found,
nowhere in site, trees shadowing over me, ducking and
dodging so no one can see me. I am the reason why it
is the way it is. Having to watch myself every step of
the way, but that's how it is growing up on these streets
of LA, where you hear gun shots ring off at least once
a day, so you hope and pray you don't turn the TV on
and see another teen laying on the floor. I give words of
encouragement yet again, I pray to the lord please don't
let it happen again. I'm a man of God but I don't think He
is listening, so I am praying to the streets saying please
don let it happen to me or nobody else yet again.

-Deshawn in Los Angeles

Sub-Survival

I was cornered, alone, and afraid. Cornered in a world
that is round. Alone in a home filled with family. Afraid
of individual success. Trying to make sense of this
madness on top of their material stress. Scrapped just
begins to describe me. Unstable homes, unstable minds,
in this city what's left to find? Shattered dreams, and
broken homes and you ask us why we run and hide. It's
our only method to sub-survive.

But that's done cause we're trying! Don't believe me
just try it. Call on us, cause in LA we don't rally we riot!

-Rainbow in Los Angeles

When I Needed It Most...

There was that one person I knew I could turn to.

She was my hero.
She was my enemy.
She was always there.
She always cared.

When I needed it most...
She wouldn't turn her back
She would love and support me
She would encourage me
She would be an amazing Role Model

When I needed it most...
All her words would be right.
All her advice would be helpful.
All her soothing techniques would work.

So I want to thank God because

When I needed it most...
He gave me my mother

-Cassie in Fresno

My Father Wasn't There

When I needed it the most was when I was a young child.
My father, he was never there. He was always asleep
because of the drugs. When I needed his advice he just
ignored me. When I needed his help he just brushed me
and took more pills. When he was on the pills he was
abusive. He would strike me for no reason just to see me
cry. I still have love for my father but not as much as I
wish I had.

-James in Los Angeles

Motivating Myself

I feel like even though I am the product of my parents I
refuse to follow in their footsteps. I am my own person,
and only I can motivate myself to get out of the situations
that I face daily.

-Motivated in Los Angeles

America's Priorities

People call America this super-power. Say America is
this good country where there is no reason for us to be
unhappy. Unfortunately this is not the reality. Many
teens, like myself, live below the poverty line. Our main
concern is not the type of car we'll get but where will
we get our next meal from. We have all this money to
fuel wars based on personal vendettas and lies, but not
enough money for education, more shelters, drop-in
centers and healthcare affordable by all.

-Ashley in Los Angeles

What I Really Needed

When I needed it most I couldn't get a response.

Speaking for those who are physically absent,
but somewhere in the world did exist.

Started to get tired of this game we call life
Behind this mask there is a face.

A combined recipe

A vital ingredient

Of the human race.

He said, and she said

They would always be there

But like a unsolved crime

He, her, she, and him

Disappeared without a trace.

But one day I woke up

And reality welcomed me into existence

And I didn't care who didn't want to listen

When I look back on life it wasn't me who was the fool

It was the one who was given the job of helping me

But didn't have the proper tools

Because truly helping someone

That degree don't matter

Who you know don't matter

How much you have don't matter

You point of view don't matter

What matters is the belief system.

It's faith that matters.

Hope that matters.

The will to listen that matters.

Not the money in you bank account

But the willingness

To sacrifice the best investment in the world

A duty and service to help those who look like you and
me

And I'm not talking about looking through the eyes of
society

When I needed it most

I found it today.

Self love

Self sacrifice

Self appreciation

Self dedication

Self respect.

That's what I needed most.

-Eva in Los Angeles

What I Didn't Get

I didn't get help, love, attention, comfort, forgiveness, an apology, treatment, an answer, prayers, a hug, a kiss, some sort of affection, chosen, left alone, invited, understood, believed in, told the truth, cared about, a friend, a brother, a sister, a mom, a dad, anyone at all who knew I existed. It's funny...You get everything you don't need when you don't need it and nothing you need when you need it.

-Existing in Los Angeles

Helping Myself

I trust the most when Angels fly by my side. They are the most wonderful people in the entire world. Their group of people are the best. They help me help myself. They give me support. They listen to everything that someone has to say. They will go out of their way to help you in any way that they could possibly do. You never have to doubt them.

Helping yourself is helping the earth and helping the earth is helping yourself. Show the world that you can do anything that you set your mind to. Never give up on your dreams and hopes. Everything is possible, just don't give up, keep your head straight no matter what.

-Liliana in Los Angeles

Just Want To Be Me

I want everything to be my way
I want to be accepted by everyone
I want to be successful in my life

I want to travel the world and the seven seas
I want to fall from a mountain and never reach the ground and feel the earth's air in my face.
I want to do so many things that I can't name them all.
I want to live a long life (die old with someone by my side)

I want to explore so many things I haven't yet.
I want to sit down and think about all the wonderful times in my life I have been through.
I just want to be ME, Ruby, and no one else.

-Ruby in Los Angeles

What I Needed Get And What I got

At a young age I needed a better neighborhood, because living in Hunter's Point there was a lot of factories and liquor stores. I needed a therapist that could really understand me and that I could compare my life to. I feel like I needed a better father figure. Family support with alcoholism and how it affects everyone's life, like me being addicted to medication and having asthma. I needed better housing.

When I was younger I lived in a shelter in the Fillmore; it looked like a jail. The only good thing was that I had an art room where all the kids would come in and we would make art.

Stephany in San Francisco

Other Families

My family wasn't there and I felt lonely, depressed. But I found a family that showed me love and that cared for me. It was my best friend's mom and my sisters and brother.

-Jocelyn in Los Angeles

Mama

I am all alone, not physically but emotionally. When I needed you the most you were not there. It's not your fault, but it is. You are not to blame, but you are. The life you chose separated me from you. When I needed my heart you had it with you. When I needed to know, you didn't tell me the truth. All day I would wait and you wouldn't come. My mama, my heart, my love, all I ever wanted, all I ever needed.

And now that I have you, I've lost so much. I've sacrificed so much. I moved to a scary place known as the hood. Black kid that is white washed, learning as I go along. Being raised in both worlds is the reason why I am strong. When I needed you you would flake. So I realized me needing you is what made me fake.

-Bobby in San Francisco

Ideal World

Ideal world, who could create that?

Is it you? Or is it I?

Is it you and I both?

Ideal world, what would it be?

Would it be fun? Or would it be sad?

Maybe it would make me cry.

Ideal world, when will it be?

Will it be now? Or will it be tomorrow?

What, who, when will it be an ideal world?

A world where everyone could just be.

Ideal world, is it a lie?

Or is it a fantasy that lives in my mind?

Would you like mine?

No? Then don't live in it!

Ideal world, live it!

Ideal world, make it!

Ideal world, dream it!

Do you want to be part of that ideal world?

Then come and join me 'cause we both can make our ideal world a reality, a dream come true!

-Bamby in Los Angeles

When I Needed It Most

I got nothing, because if I would tell the truth you wouldn't do anything anyways so why should I need something from someone who don't have anything but negativity to give?

When I needed it most you threw sh** in my face. You had it in the palm of your hand and teased me with it. When I needed it most you weren't there, and now I've died so I don't need it anymore.

-Jevon in Los Angeles

Then And Now

When I needed it most people laugh in my face & brag & boast. When I needed it most people left me behind to rot in one self conscious mind. Growing up, no guidance for a young street thug so I turn to gang-banging, drug slangin' and turn to my homies for love. Now I look back and regret what I did. I grew up hard but still want the best for my kids. Why I want to change is so I'm not looking over my shoulder because that's no way to live.

-Wanting the Best in Los Angeles

Stand Up

When I needed it most it wasn't there
 So from coast-to-coast I began to share
 the love I didn't have for myself with others
 being beat by my mother and my brother
 postin' up with thugs and indulging in drugs
 another homie passes and people shrug
 all the corrupt cops swept it all under the rug
 because hoodlums to them just ain't good enough
 so why give a fluff

Might as well just put 'em in cuffs
 but I call their bluffs
 and stand up against what they stand for.

I personally won't take it anymore
 they don't deserve to earn money off me
 I have such animosity towards the system
 when they continue to destroy our youth
 and throw us in prisons
 in every form and fashion.

I have such compassion
 for the prevention and intervention
 for the next generation

help us to see they're killing off our brothers
 different races but in the same places
 wrapped up in murder and robbery
 when we're all in poverty.

So I say give hugs f drugs
 hustle legally and prove you're not just thugs.

You mean something
 ya ain't nothing
 and with the love from up above
 you will see your destiny.

-Melissa in Los Angeles

Supported and Not Supported

When I need help most it's rarely there. When I really needed money, I didn't have it, so I would end up doing something negative like selling something or robbing someone for it. When I really needed my family, they always seemed close enough to take me out of that negative situation. But support was never there, so there was no positive drive in doing good in school. It's like I have doubts because it's really up to yourself to make things happen.

-Independent in San Francisco

Thank You

You was there to listen. You was there to feel where I was coming from, to talk to me and be there. When I needed something and you had it, you gave, and I love you for that. You was even there on my best days. When we didn't have nothing to do you always came up with something stupid to do. So thank you for being there when I needed it most.

-Thankful in Oakland

By My Side

There was nobody there for me. On Friday it's my prom and I'm not going be able to go. When I needed it most, that's when it seemed like nobody was by my side. The only thing that made me happy was that I saw my mother.

-Lonely in Oakland

A Good Listener

When I need it most is when I need help, cause most of us can't do it ourselves. We can some do some of it, but when it comes to emotional part I need help cause I believe that my feelings get in the way. I know that what we need most is good listener.

-Avanna in Los Angeles

Things Could Have Been Easier

When I was becoming a young teen I felt I really needed my father or my mother and I didn't have none, so for me growing up it was different. It seemed like everybody around me had somebody telling them something...So that left me feeling like a lost child waiting to be saved. That's when my mother got out of jail. I wish I could say the same about my father who passed away in my earlier days of life, actually when I was six or seven years old.

If I only had that guidance in my life at that moment I feel it would have made me a better person. But hey, I can't complain. If it wasn't for what happened, I wouldn't be where I am at today, so I don't really have no regrets. But I could say things would of been a lot easier, especially for me.

-Devin in San Francisco

Getting Help And Making Choices

When I needed it most was when I did not have a family that I could lean on. When I could only cope with drugs. When I thought I wanted to end my life. When I made that choice that my life was going the wrong way from what my family wanted. I didn't want to be the one on drugs working at the local burger stop at the age of 30. I sought help through other people. I found that I wasn't the only one out there. I turned my life around with the help of jail, CSW, and group homes. Now I make choices in my own life, without the choices being made for me. That's when I needed it most.

-Donald in Los Angeles

In Juvie

When I needed it the most is when I was in juvenile hall. I needed help and guidance. I needed somebody to talk to. I needed somebody to understand me, and where I was coming from. I needed somebody to tell me to have motivation to move forward instead of moving backwards.

-Lady in Oakland

Missing You

On the calendar
 I scratch off another day
 it doesn't matter what's the day.

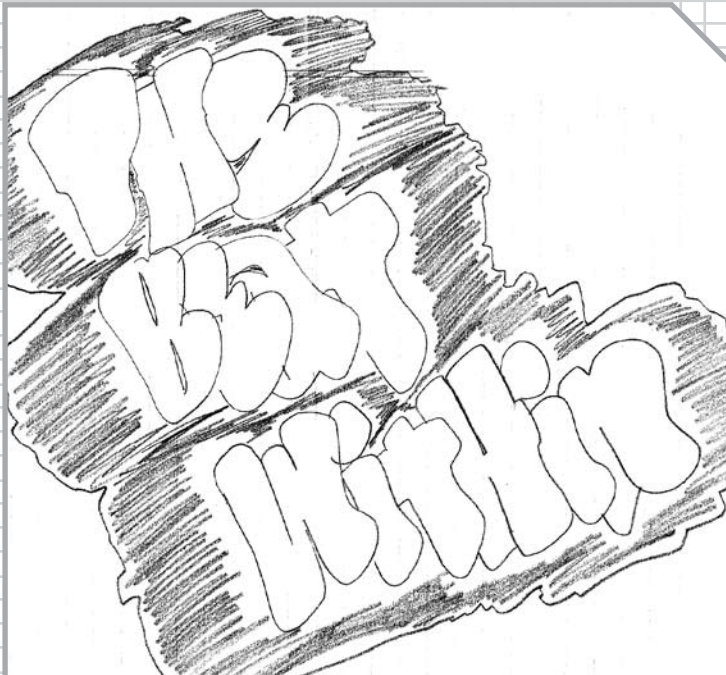
Every day's the same,
 Another empty day
 the emptiness just stays
 stuck inside me

where my heart once was
 until it was torn from me.
 If only you were here

-Lyssa in Los Angeles

Where Were You?

Like a fish with no water,
A baby with no milk
Young teen mother all alone
No love, morals or guidance
Where were you when I needed you most?
-Teen Mom in Oakland



Right in Front of Me

What I needed most...A chance
What I needed most...A voice
What I needed most...A purpose
What I needed most...A Life
What I needed most...An ear
What I needed most...To regroup my thoughts
What I needed most it was all in front of me
I couldn't feel it nor hear it, it wasn't what the eyes
could see, but what the heart could feel it was standing
there with open arms, but I was blinded by the
misconception and a past problem which was out of my
control. I dwelled on a piece of life which did not hurt
me only taught me a lesson of wisdom...
What I needed most...God blessed me with
What I needed most was the pain
What I needed most was the trouble
What I needed most was the struggle
What I needed most and what I got was a lesson to be
learned...and now is a lesson to be taught.
God blessed me with the tools to make it through my
life.
What I needed most... was right in front of me
-Troubled in San Francisco

I Wish

What I needed most was my real dad, 'cause I would be
able to talk to him about things that he went through and
I would be able to express my thoughts with him.
-Wishing in Los Angeles

Homies On The Block

When I needed it the most, it was nowhere to be found.
All the homies on the block trying to eat and survive.
But what they need to know is that it's survival of the
fittest so can't nobody cry.
The homies on the block trying to eat off some rocks
But when the feds catch up it's life
On the block without yo Glock.
Yo, 17 shots is like the seventeen years of life.
Life that should have never been taken,
but you just behind them bars living it.
-Ronnie in San Francisco

Help From Family

I need my family support for they can tell me that I can
do it and that they love me.
-Loved in Los Angeles

Different Kinds Of Friends

I had my friend to be there to support me and go through
it all. I turned to tweak and thought I had everything.
-A Friend in Los Angeles

When I Needed It Most

When I needed it most you told me I had to go.
When I needed it the most you threw me out the door.
When I needed it the most you took me to the store.
When I needed it the most you told me I can't have no
more.
-Ebony in San Francisco

Guess What? You Wasn't There For Me

What I needed the most was for the homies to be there
for me, but it feels like when I am down nobody wants to
care for me. Now I'm all lonely thinking about how I was
just with the homies, now ya gone, life feels so phony.
It's ugly on the streets so you better watch your back
from the phony, because they are going to lead you to
death, now you're put to rest. Well hey I suggest you go
the positive route because life in the hood is never the
way to go.
-Positive in San Francisco

God Was There

When I need it most I was in tears.
When I needed it God was there.
When I needed it the most...
To pass my fears for many years.
Amen.
God Bless.
-Antonio in San Francisco

No One Was There

I believed God was always for everything. When I needed
it most all I had to do was cry, call his name and sing.
When I needed it most I felt like I had nothing. When I
needed it most no one was there for me.
-Alone in Oakland

Project What!!

The story that follows is an ongoing series from Bay Area youth sharing firsthand what it's like to have a parent in prison or jail. These young authors, all of whom participate in a program called Project WHAT! —We're Here and Talking, will continue to be featured in upcoming issues of The Beat Within. We hope you like what you have read thus far! The common thread tying together these authors' stories is that each of them has had a parent incarcerated. Not all of the youth focus directly on their parent's incarceration, but they write about their own struggles, successes, dreams, and goals. This week's story is by Marriah Humphrey. We hope the stories inspire you and give you insight into these young people's lives.

I am proud to be the Program Director of Project WHAT! As Program Director, I have the opportunity to work closely with the talented and courageous group of teenagers and young adults who make up our team. Project WHAT! creates opportunities for the team to empower themselves and educate others by speaking out about parental incarceration.

Project WHAT! is a program of Community Works, a nonprofit organization based in Berkeley, California. For more information, and to access the resource guide, call us at (510) 486-2340 or go online to: [HYPERLINK "http://www.community-works-ca.org/programs/projectwhat.html"](http://www.community-works-ca.org/programs/projectwhat.html) www.community-works-ca.org/programs/projectwhat.html. If you're a young person who has a parent incarcerated and want a copy of our resource guide, we'll mail you a free copy. We hope you enjoy these stories.

-Anna Wong
Program and Policy Director, Project WHAT!

Survivor

I can recall, vividly, nights when my dad, brother and I were home watching movies, and my dad would say those little words that started my heart racing with fear. "I'm going to the store. I'll be right back." I knew from experience that once he left chances were he wouldn't come back. I would cry and cry and beg him, "Daddy, don't go, if you really love me you won't leave us, you don't have to go." But he always left. Then would come that dreaded phone call saying how sorry he was that he wouldn't be around for awhile.

My dad had an addiction to crack and cocaine that was stronger than me and my family. He was in and out of jail, prison for all of my childhood and adolescent years, up until I was about 16 years old; at that point he made his home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he last did time at. When I was a little girl and he would disappear, my mom would tell me he was working, "in the fields", I think she would say, and couldn't come home. The thought that lingered in my mind was, "Why didn't he know and tell us ahead of time if he was going to be away for awhile working?" It was my cousin, or friend of the family who eventually told me, "You know your dad's not really working, right? They're just lying to you. He's really in jail." I listened more closely to phone call conversations my mom was having with my dad and other people and I figured it out for myself.

For awhile I still played along because I didn't know how to bring it up, but it eventually came out in the open. That's when my family started to really talk bad about my dad. My grandparents, uncles and aunts on my mom's side would say, "He's not a dad to you, he's not helping you, he doesn't do anything for you. He doesn't help your mom;

From The Beat: Project WHAT! is back! We are down to a few more installments from our wonderful colleagues over at Project WHAT! As always we are thrilled to have their words in our publication. This week, Therese Rodriguez steps up with her thoughtful and touching piece titled, "Survivor." Although there's only a couple more stories left from Project WHAT! We are confident that we will be hearing from them again sooner than later. We readers of The Beat Within want to thank not only you fantastic writers for sharing your stories, but director, Anna Wong, for allowing The Beat Within's readership a glimpse into the Project WHAT! world.

look where he's at. He's more like your dad." They would say this referring to my grandpa or uncle. My brother and I were raised not to talk back to our elders but everything they said to me or anyone else about my dad got me very angry and built resentment towards them. My dad was my everything, my shining star; I was the firstborn, daddy's little girl. No matter how much he hurt me and my family, he was still my dad, and I didn't like when anyone said otherwise. I defended my father and always protected and defended him; when he was around me and my brother were always nice to him because we saw how my mom's family treated him.

My brother and I never visited my dad when he was locked up. I'm not sure if it was my mom's or my dad's idea for us not to go, but we never questioned why we didn't visit him, I guess I always assumed he was very far away. I remember feeling stressed out because it was hard for me to write him. He would send us birthday cards, letters and drawings of cartoons, like Mickey and Minnie Mouse. I loved receiving these drawings, I knew he was an artist and I felt proud of that. On the other hand, I never really sent him anything. On the phone he'd ask if I'd written or sent him anything and I would lie and say tell him yes. He'd say, "I haven't gotten it yet." And I'd always make up some lie, "I don't know what happened to it, it probably got lost in the mail". When he would come back home from being locked up he'd be in a good mood at first, but the anxiety would build up in me. I knew that we'd get whooped in only a matter of time for all those lies we told him. I'm sure it hurt him that we never really wrote him a letter or sent him anything, but there was nothing I had to say to him.

Each time my dad went away it grew more and more painful for me to have to be without my dad and each time apart from us grew longer. When I was in fourth grade, I believe, my parents finally got divorced. My dad was sent to prison in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and when he was released for the final time he decided to stay out there, believing that he needed to get away from his old lifestyle and bad habits in the city. He came back to visit us and apologize for everything he did to us and asked for our forgiveness. At the time I really couldn't respond and express how I really felt about it all, and I just hugged him, as he cried and I told him that it was okay. His other intention in coming down to see us was to have us move up to Milwaukee with him, but none of us was ready to change our lives around to fit his new lifestyle. We visited him before making our final decision to stay in San Francisco, where we really felt was our home. I was hurt that in the end he chose to live out there without us, I guess I had always assumed that he would eventually come back and make up for lost time. Then I figured it wouldn't make that big of a difference since I was used to him not being around anyway. He is now married and is having his "second chance at being a dad"; he is the caretaker of my niece, while my sister does time in prison.

My dad's absence robbed me of my childhood. Since as far back as I can remember I have always been put in

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this "superwoman" role. I was there for my mom, my brother and my grandma when my dad wasn't around. My mom was so caught up with all of the problems my dad put her through, that I was more like a sister to her than a daughter. At times I had to take care of not only my brother but my mom's friends' kids when my mom would go out. For awhile she partied and live out her youth that she had missed out on because she got married and had kids at a young age. My brother thought of me as his mom too and I quickly learned responsibility.

I also learned what it was like to disappoint. As a young teenager I went through a very rebellious phase, drinking, doing drugs, and coming home very late. When my brother saw my whole behavior and lifestyle, his whole world changed. I had been his role model and I was put on such a high pedestal that it really hurt him to see me that way. My brother internalized it all and closed up a lot; this really hurt me because we didn't really connect as much. When he was in high school, I saw him doing things I had done and he'd tell me, "Well you did it when you were my age! At this time I had changed my behavior and was living a healthy and positive lifestyle. I felt like such a failure, like I had let my family down, but at the same time that responsibility and pressure shouldn't have been put on me. I carried resentment toward my mom for years because of these situations; I felt that she wasn't there for us either when I really needed her to be. We have a positive relationship now.

While in school, I had a lot of pain inside that I masked. I always kept a front like everything was okay, but I wasn't able to concentrate or focus on school because of the situation with my family. Teachers saw me as another "bad" student who didn't care about school or was not motivated to succeed, which fit in with their assumptions about me as a Latina anyways. To some level their assumption about my motivation to learn and stay in school was true, but none of my teachers ever took the time to find out why or even put a little faith in me. I was never offered tutoring, counseling, A.P. courses, college classes, or academic advising. Instead of paying attention to what my needs really were, or try to understand what I was going through, or even listen to what I had to say they just wrote me off and I was tracked all through elementary and high school.

I also suffered because I missed out on having that positive male role model in my life for guidance or support. During my pre-teen and teenage years, I never had a dad or any adult teach me about boys and dating, what love would be like, or what it would feel like to get your heart broken. I simply relied on my cousins, friends and my street smarts. When I started dating my lingering insecurities came out about how my dad had always left us and never changed his behavior. I would base how much a guy loved me or cared about me on his ability to better himself and how much he wanted to be around me. I'm sure that I would have made smarter decisions about love and infatuation if I had a good example of what love, relationships and marriage was like at home.

I eventually matured, and I have my own family now, a husband and my beautiful baby boy, Salvador Adriel, "Jr". My experiences growing up motivate me to try very hard with my marriage; I put a lot into it, and make sure that he is as well. I would never want to put my son through such horrible experiences as an absent father, divorce and/or watching his parents date other people. I want to be there

physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually for my son so that he has what I missed out on. For example, in my family, my dad was the cook, so when he was away my mom would try to cook, order out, or make T.V. dinners. To this day I will not touch a T.V. dinner, I don't plan on my son having one either. I even cook his baby food. In the beginning my husband would say, "let's just get him some Gerber's", and I was not having it. I want to give my son the love, consistency, stability and trust so that he can grow up knowing that he is loved unconditionally, but I also want him to be independent, as I learned to be.

I'm learning to have a father-daughter relationship; it has been a challenge because we live far from each other and our lives are so different. The last time he was locked up he got into reading the Bible, became a born again Christian and changed his whole life around. I also found a strong comfort and desire in reading the Bible and going to church; it has been a positive aspect in my life. Even though that has brought us closer, I feel it also keeps us apart when I tell him that I am not going to church or reading the Bible. I'm now 24 years old and am at a part of my life where I really don't "need" him to be there for me; I am comfortable the way things are now. I do miss him though and wish he could meet my son.

As I got older, I analyzed drugs and the effect they have on people. I have seen how a person who has a drug problem is often blamed for their addiction and thought of as selfish. Families often learn to hate the person who's an addict and push them away instead of helping them. I understand that families who do this might also have reason to, possibly because they have been hurt by them, or have had their things stolen, have been lied to or have made their life difficult.

People make it seem like it is so easy to quit. As if the person really cared about their family they would stop whatever addiction they had. I believe that drugs are an overpowering force; its purpose is to kill, steal and destroy that person, everything they stand for and everyone they love. Like with my father, I know he loved us; it didn't mean that he loved us any less because he did not quit or change. So I'm not mad at him for that. But I'm mad that we couldn't move forward as a family and that we didn't have money. I'm mad that we had to depend on my grandpa who had struggled all his life to get where he was at. I'm mad that once my dad was released from jail there weren't jobs available to him, or that he could hold any of the jobs he had. I wish that my family knew about other resources to assess for the needs that we had; no one thought about how it would affect me and my brother, including my family.

These are some of the reasons why I chose to become a Social Worker. I'm now in the last year of the Master's program at State. A lot of people who need services are from low-income neighborhoods and struggling families. These experiences have helped me to grow into a very strong and independent person. My desire and passion is to help people, especially, children, youth and families who have many hardships, barriers in their life. Sometimes people go to college just to focus on making money, getting a better job, then moving out of their neighborhood. Not me, I'm working and educating myself so that I can use my skills and degree to help advocate for people, provide therapy, change policies and organize.

-Therese Rodriguez, Project WHAT!

These experiences have helped me to grow into a very strong and independent person.

From Coward To Fighter

I always was a quiet person ever since I was a little kid, yeah I guess you could say I was a shy guy, but to the people I did talk to they'd say I was quite a speaker but I just paid no mind to them. Just as I was a quite person I was also a scaredy cat, intimidated by others easily because I was always the small one out of all my friends.

Older and bigger kids used to always bully me around for no reason, and there was even times I would go home with bruises and lie about them because of fear for what they would do to me when I went back to school.

One day I went home with a couple of bruises on my face and my uncle had seen them and got mad at me because he already knew what was going on. So then he told me, "Put your hands up!"

I didn't know what he meant.

Then he said, "Today is the last day you let someone do this to your face, 'cause if I see bruises on your face but none on your fist, you'll be hitting push ups all night!"

I laughed, it amused me for a second, but then I saw he was serious and I understood. So then he started to teach me how to defend myself, until one day, I could never forget this day cause it was the last day I was a scaredy cat.

Well on the morning of this day it wasn't going good, already my moms was yelling at me all morning, 'till I went to school, so and you could tell I was already sort of pissed.

By the time I got to school I was late and I saw some kid getting there late too, but at first I couldn't see who it was, but then I saw it was Joey, the same kid who was giving me bruises all the time.

I started to walk faster trying to at least avoid him, but I knew it wasn't going to work 'cause I had him in class.

So then recess came around and I was hanging out with my friend, a female friend, and I saw him walking towards me.

My hands started to shake and my palms where sweaty as hell. I started to walk away and my friend walked beside me, but then I heard footsteps running up and I knew it was coming, but the coward ended up pushing my female friend! I then knew he had gone to far, so then my fist became as hard as rocks and as he turned to me I drew my elbow back and struck him twice in the face causing him to bleed constantly. He then fell to the ground and began to cry. I felt so good I even forgot to help my friend up.

So yeah after that I got expelled from school 'cause I broke his nose, then I went home and told my uncle what happened, he was glad. but then he said. "just 'cause you have the power to make someone bleed doesn't mean you should do it, you'll be just as bad as the bully who would bully you."

To tell you the truth I didn't really care what he said, 'cause I felt so good. And after that day I've been getting kicked out of every school and still am.

-The Aztec Warrior, Santa Clara

From The Beat: You deliver a very exciting on-topic piece right out of the pages of your life. We agree with your uncle, but you did what was right in that situation, or so it sounds from what you write. You have a gift, as a writer and story teller the time is now to educate the future and take the initial steps in bettering your life. You need to stay in school and not find your self on tour from school to school. WE look forward to the next story!

My hands started to shake and my palms where sweaty as hell.

My Animal Story

My favorite animal story is on my dog, Cookie. She's a poodle and she is very nice. The thing that shock me was that one night that we were all asleep. That night, my 15-year-old brother was sleeping. He had a candle in his room, and it fell on the floor. He didn't notice it, and the room caught on fire. Not even my brother because he sleeps like a rock, and the only one how noticed the fire was my dog.

She was sleeping in the backyard. And out of nowhere she came in the house and she started to bark at my brother's door. I came out of my room and told her to shut up and go to sleep, and she keep on barking at the door and she kept on scratching on the door. And then I went to the door and I seen smoke come out of the bottom of the door. So I tried to open the door, but the door was locked. So I kicked it, and the door fell.

Then my dog ran in the room and she brought him out and my mom called the police. I took my brother to the living room and my dog stayed by his side the whole time I went and got the water hose. I was able to put out the fire before it got too big. So I am happy to have that dog! She is a Angel that God gave me.

-Mendoza, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This is a heart-warming story, and well written. It sounds like Cookie was raised with a lot of love, and took her opportunity to give back. Where is Angel now? Who is taking care of her? We hope that soon it's you.

The Animal in Me

My favorite animal story would have to be the story of the animal in me. My life has been one big adventure that has taken a turn for the worst. The animal would not stop in me for the good part of the last five years of my life. It has gotten me addicted to drugs, crime, and being institutionalized.

The animal came out when I was a young teen and now I am eighteen, realizing the animal within has taken my teenage years away from me. I am left now with no job and college seems long gone. In fact, it seems as if my graduating class has passed me up, and I'm left to mend my mistakes. It seems like a long hard road until success, but I realize now, that it is time to cage the animal.

-Z-Wizzle, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This is a powerful piece. Sometimes the only way we can understand our own actions is to differentiate ourselves from the powerful forces within us.

Hate

I think that hate is a learned thing. It doesn't come naturally or instinctively as many people think. It is passed on from one person to another.

A child doesn't come into this world with the ability to hate. An action has to be done or a certain view has to be pressed upon someone for the hate to come about.

For example, one is not born with hate for Africans and other people of color. His views of race and probably many other things have been skewed. Whether the views come from a parent or a school teacher, they have been learned and accepted because the person that thought of such hate was very influential to that receiver.

-Joseph, Alameda

From The Beat: Great insights. As young people, Beat readers should be aware of people in their lives who might be trying to influence them to hate others, such as people of a different race or from a different country, or people from a different block or crew. Even the corrections system breeds hate. In prison, inmates are often divided up and pitted against one another by race or gang affiliation. Spreading hate can be a powerful and ugly form of control over people.

Freedom?

People say, "We're living in the land of the free," when not one person in this land is free. And they say, "You can't put a price on freedom." Well, I guess the government can, because they send our people to a distant land to die. Why? To kill? Why? Forced to live the rest of their lives, knowing they took that opportunity from someone else. I'm not sure, myself, but I think that's a fate far worse than hell.

But we shrug our shoulders and say, "Oh, well, because our cause is just," or so we were made to believe. Using armor piercing bullets, forcing others to bleed, breaking families in attempts to bring a country to their knees. Pushing a power machine and a book full of beliefs that may or may not work in our own country.

Only one person in Congress has a son enlisted in the army. That's a fact. You can quote me. So in a country where our leaders can't send their own sons and daughters to fight, tell me, how can anyone believe we have any rights?

-William, San Francisco

From The Beat: You obviously have a great ability to think clearly about the world and to reason things out for yourself. (It makes us wonder how you got here...) Do you think things would be different if the rich and powerful (and our so-called leaders) had to send their own sons and daughters into harm's way? Back during the Vietnam War (and before), there was a military draft forcing everybody to do military service. Do you think that would be a fairer system? If there were a draft and you were called to go, what would you do?

Saving a Girl's Life from Death

I was walking to my grandmother's house from school, when I seen a little girl about five years old in the streets. So I dropped my backpack and ran so fast so the car would not hit her.

I went up to her mother's house, and when I was inside and looked around the room-I seen roaches, rats, all kind of bugs. When I went to the mother's room, I seen her passed out on the floor with a needle stuck in her arm.

So I picked up the little girl, went to the little girls' room and looked around. I didn't even see a bed, clothes, shoes, nothing on the little girl either. All she had on was a diaper and a little T-shirt.

So I took the little girl to my grandmother's house and told my grandmother what happened.

Then my grandma said, "First let's give the little girl a bath, warm clothes, and something to eat. Then let her get some sleep, and we will call children's services when she wakes up."

We called them up. They came to my grandmother's house and said, "Where did you find this little girl?"

"I found her in the streets," I said. "With only a diaper and a T-shirt. I did go in her mother's house, I don't even want to tell you what I seen, but her mother was passed out with a needle in her arm."

Then the people said, "We appreciate that you saved this little girl from that car. We will take good care of this little girl and find her a home with a good family."

I asked them, "What are you going to do with the mother?" The lady said, "The mother will be going to the doctor first. Then when she gets well, she will be going to jail for child abuse and abandonment."

-Deanna, Alameda

From The Beat: This is a tragic story - just imagine that poor woman, losing her child and soul to such a dark drug - but it is wonderful that you were able to intervene, and hopefully get that poor girl to a better home. It sounds like your grandmother is a good and giving person. Has she been a major figure in your life?

What's Life

My vision of life is blurry, I can see no further
my mom is hella cryin, I already hurt her
'cause the devil's got my soul and my heart turned cold
and froze the seal around my goals so they can't unfold
but I don't know what's best for me
police always arrestin' me
'cause when someone starts testing me, my temper gets
ahead of me
"Just have faith." Yeah, that's what my father said to me
yeah, I pray but I feel like God's forgettin' me
sometimes I wonder if he's really there
I know that he's real but after all I've done, does he still
care

I try to make sense of it
Makin' moves without seeing my enemies like battleship
if I knew the demons in my life, I'd try to battle it
but I dug this hole so deep I can't get out of it
should I try to compete or should I call it quits
will my destiny come or is this where it sits

I don't know
in general, I'm really confused was verbally scarred
and now I just mentally bruised
I'm getting' hit back by all the knowledge that I abused
like checkers, I'm getting swept away with only one
move

I'm tryin' to make the best of life, I ain't tryna lose
There's only two paths in life that I am able to use
I have to choose, in between the dark and light
Throwin' punches, but I still don't know who to fight
If I look to God maybe I'll regain my sight
until then, I'll release my mind whenever I write
on what's life...

-Angelo, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This is a strong poem about the struggles of life. You have a real way with words. We love the line: "Like checkers, I'm getting swept away with just one move." Keep up the good work.

I'm Sorry

I'm sorry mom for everything
That I have done wrong
I'm sorry for the tears I've caused
That have made you cry so long

I'm sorry for the hurt
I'm sorry for the pain
I'm sorry for the stress
That could have made you insane

I've put you through a lot
I've put you through so much,
No matter what I did to you
You gave me that mother touch

You've been there for me
Through thick or thin
Regardless if I win
I love you and I'm sorry

From son to his mommy
Please forgive me
And my promise to you —
I will change

-Halo, San Francisco

From The Beat: Another powerful poem that is both promise and prayer. It's time to start building your karma on the positive side of the scales so that all the sorrow you feel towards your mother will be replaced with pride.

The Beat Of My Heart

I listen to my breathing trying to hold it in,
 listen to his foot steps
 as the room begins to spin.
 Hiding in the closet,
 hoping to stay hidden
 behind the closed door,
 full of all the secrets within.
 I see him closer now,
 I try to plead and pray
 it's too late
 now he drags me far away.
 Away into the well lit room
 where his face twists and turns,
 I feel his nails digging,
 feel how my arm burns.
 A slap across the face
 sends me flying to the ground
 asking God why?
 Why had I been found?
 Once more his fist fly,
 that's when I hear a, crack,
 suddenly I'm sleepy, sinking,
 all the memories flooding back.
 Memories of when we were whole,
 everything so happy and free
 when no violence flooded,
 hope and then he slowly took me.
 Took me where I couldn't leave,
 a cliff that was too steep,
 slowly he pushed me over the edge
 until I was in too deep.
 Now I lay here all alone,
 the depression coming now.
 I want to get out,
 but I just don't know how.

-Jessie, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: There is a fine line between being disciplined as a child and being abused and it's very clear you have had to suffer the latter. No child should suffer the abuse you have had to go through, however, you don't say just who is doing the abusing. With your well placed words you seem to be hiding or protecting this person, if anything you should be saying who it is, so this person stops what he/she is doing. If you don't the cycle of violence will continue, use your voice and speak out. Stop the cycle of violence.

Blind With Hatred

Eyes locked shut with safety pins
 I walk on with nowhere to go
 Destined to end up like everyone else
 Or so that's what they hope
 I've been telling the rain my secrets
 I've been crying in the night
 I can't rip my wrists from these handcuffs
 But I won't die without a fight
 I've tripped more than thrice now
 I've been caught by the ocean breeze
 I've surrendered for no reason
 Why did I fall down to my knees?
 I grew ill while in your arms
 And burned before my death
 You dropped me and walked away
 Before my final breath

-Lemmings, San Francisco

From The Beat: Oh yes, whoever you wrote this poem to dropped you long, long before your final breath. No one who writes with this much passion could be called near death. Girl, you are filled with life! It may torment you! It may leave you wondering and confused! It may even leave you feeling like giving up at times, but you aren't giving up, and we're the better for it. We think you've got great things ahead of you, so don't confuse your inability to see what's around the next corner with some mistaken conclusion that there's nothing there. There's something there. There's something here. Keep writing so that we can keep reading!

Stranded

Stranded is something that everyone goes through.
 Being stranded is a feeling of pain and loneliness.
 Being left alone, no one to be with but yourself.
 Being abandoned to look after yourself and survive.
 Being independent to take care of your future.
 Being let out to learn and better yourself for life.
 Stranded can make you stronger if you follow the right path,
 but stranded can also send you to a world of imprisonment
 and loneliness
 for years and life.
 Being stranded can do nothing but hurt,
 no matter what the outcome is.

-John, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Sounds like you know what you're talking about. We hope your days of feeling stranded are coming to an end. You have a lot to offer the world. Hang in there John.

Stolen

I see him creeping up on me
 But he don't think I'm looking
 I am spitting holy water at him
 For my heart that was taken
 The door's open
 I just gotta get my foot in
 And now my brain and my shadow arguing
 So my body acts like a shield
 And starts hardening
 And now Jesus knows
 What my soul's been guarding
 Just pushed "reset" on my life
 So the game's restarting
 I was born with weak bones
 Now I am the calcium in the milk carton
 I am just another poet
 Hiding behind dark tents
 You never know
 I might be the next bum
 Sleeping on a park bench
 But I am not scared
 So I don't flinch
 I think the screws in my head
 Need to be tightened
 So just hand me the wrench
 Gave all my presents to the Grinch
 Now them angels cheering my name
 And I am 'bout to put out the devil
 By crying a tear in the flame
 Looking for the men who killed my father
 But ain't no one to blame
 I got the keys
 But these people got the ignition
 The car's looking dirty
 So I oil up the pistons
 And in my head
 I am trying to do right
 But only God knows my mission
 Don't worry about my soul messing
 Because it belongs to the Christians

-Dark Side, San Francisco

From The Beat: Sometimes you go 'round and 'round with Jesus, don't you Dark Side? Is Jesus a source of strength, of guidance for you, or a threat, or both? How do you think Jesus regards whatever your soul has been guarding, that you've been hiding from him? How do you regard your own soul? Is Jesus the bum on the park bench? Do you envision yourself as that bum on the bench? You sound like you're right between the influences of your shadow and yourself, that are constantly arguing. Will your vulnerability to so many influences be a problem for you on the outs? Or will you just wait and see what strengths, experience, wisdoms you'll need to manage on the outs, when you're out there again?

Self-Mutilation

Sadness enters through my ears
Depression eats me at my core
Creeping under my lurid skin
Crawling up my crooked spine

Tears fall like acid rain in my head
Flowing over all my thoughts
Crashing in waves against my brain
Flooding the labyrinth of my mind

Eating away at the center
Digging a hole inside my heart
Let it be a grave for me
As I fall so far deep inside

Stepping on through the darkness
Frustrated, I fall to my knees
Arms stretched forth, frantically searching
But a cure or end I cannot find

Hope takes form as a razor
Cold as it sits atop my palm
I trace its edges with my finger
I long to draw the crimson lines

Could you cross the evil threshold
Into the blackness of my soul?
For you can never know this pain
Until the shoes you wear are mine

-Lemmings, San Francisco

From The Beat: No one can know anyone else's pain but their own. But one thing we can tell you for sure, and that is what you feel today cannot predict what you'll feel tomorrow. When pain recedes, what is left is the memory of pain, and not the pain itself. But when you're experiencing the pain itself, it is almost impossible to imagine that one day it will only be a memory. That is why they say that "suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem." You describe your soul as "black," but that is only a snapshot of this moment — even if the "moment" lasts a while. Do you know Maggie the Cat in Tennessee Williams' play, "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof"? You have life inside you, deep in your soul, like Maggie the Cat. Let the "crimson lines" you long to draw be words on our pages. Let it all out. You have so much inside!

Lost and Found

I'm a little boy that's lost
I lost my freedom
I lost my rights
I lost my loved ones
And I lost my mind

I'm lost in a place that I can't get out of,
It's like a long hallway with many doors that's all dead ends.
I think to myself to pick and choose
Which door is the correct door to my family and freedom.
When I'm in my room, I hear voices...
...the voices are my parents, main squeeze, loved ones and my brothers and sisters.

All I hear is,

"I love you, I miss you, you be home before you know it, everything's gonna be alright, keep your head up, stay strong, think positive, don't stress, don't cry, don't show no weaknesses, think about the future, your life ain't over. God is on your side, God gonna help, I love you, I love you, I love you."

Them's the words I hear from the people that truly love me and care about my life and future, them the ones that keep me strong and motivate me to think bigger than big, them the people is the reason why I'm loving, because I ain't scared of death or pain, them the ones I'll never forget and let out my heart.

-J-Money, Alameda

From The Beat: This prose-poem is one of the realest things you ever wrote. It shows the agony of your situation, and makes us feel it, but also helps us appreciate the strength and love and support you have from your loved ones and brothers and sisters. You can get through this, so long as you listen to these words.

Stranded

I feel stranded all the time, lost without a home
I feel like I'm breathless, restless in a dark hole.
I feel hard to understand. I feel stranded all the time.

Tic-tock, the clock goes on

As I am standing on the block.

My steel toes can't seem to go in a different direction.
I feel stranded standin' on this corner, with a guy to my right

And the guy to the left, tryin to put up a fight.

Feel hard to hold, but still feel like gold,

Trying to get this dough but still stranded on this corner.

Stranded

It hurts to even say it.

I feel stranded again in these 4 walls.

Jail, not a sight of delight.

A judge, a PO, and a counselor, determining what's going to happen.

Stranded

I'm only 16

And I have experienced the feeling of this dark hole

So much it's come to the light.

I'm bright and put up a fight.

This money has taken over,
100, 200, 300 I get so excited.

Feel so stranded

Because I don't know how to stop.

I feel so stranded

Because my world revolves around money
and the block
and the corner.

I feel hopeless, just plain restless,

Can't continue this business, it's getting me arrested.

I feel stranded all the time.

I wish one day I could see me freedom

And not in the dark in the light.

I feel stranded all the time.

Stranded ...

As time goes by.

Stranded.

- Naya, Alameda

From The Beat: Wow, this poem got at that stranded feeling from every angle — the streets, the system, the inside of your brain and mind. Do you feel as if you could get yourself UN-stranded? You obviously have the talent, the insight, and the awareness. So what gets in your way?

Strangers Incarcerated

Scribbled and scratching, half finish pages at dawn,
People that live here are wondering where all their strength's gone, Moments of incarceration wind up like ashes in rain,

One look you're smiling, another your face is in pain,

I wake up at night with the sweat on my head,

A look in my eyes dat'll haunt you till death,

We're so far away from home or from wherever we came

That sometimes I wonder will I ever see it again,

It's true what dey say, "You can't always go home"

You can't always be warm inside da house,

You can't get that in house love

We're like orphans, strangers incarcerated!

-Jabba, San Francisco

From The Beat: We feel the haunting pain of wondering if you'll ever be home again in this fine poem. When you are home, tape this to your mirror so you never forget.

Strictly For Us

We can't keep concentration we're out of control
so they slap us with probation, sock yo' face with parole.
We have trouble with our plans, we can't accomplish our goals

It's like we dug a lil' deep we can't get out of our holes
The streets are biting our souls
And still we don't realize

That every day goes bad 'cause we see no good through
our eyes We sit around tryna think how da hell we can rise

The system wants to take us out 'cause we got gang ties
Don't be stupid homeboy why give the system a reason
To have you sittin' in a cell for many holiday seasons
We need to better ourselves too many loved ones are dying

So many hearts being broke, so many mothers are crying
Can't stop now it's time we take us a stand

If you call yourself a homie give a loved one a hand
We must be there for each other 'cause we all that we got
Our job is 24-7 don't cheese up when it's hot
I guarantee the fake will break don't trip just let 'em shake

We don't need 'em by our side half them vatos are snakes
Do yo' time don't whine pay the price for yo' crime
When you get out it's time to shine, no more nickels and dimes

Get yo' money how you need to homie not how you wanna'

I know it's kind of hard so you sell drugs on the corna'

But coke, meth and marijuana won't promise or guarantee

To get the money you need, you need a seven to three
or eight to four maybe a nine to five I know it's hard to survive

you need to eat to stay alive

but don't be a dummy don't get fooled by easy money

not all money is good I'm serious, it ain't funny

We really do what you please to get yo' cheese

Just keep it in your mind that da streets are thieves

They will take you for your freedom and yo' family

Maybe take you for your life you could end up deceased

Look in the rearview take a glance at the past

Lets better ourselves and our people real fast

Love one another, we're family, hood brothers

Push when hesitating, pick you up when in the gutter

We need to do what we do, we need to keep it alive

So no matter da situation we will push, pull and strive

Rest in peace fallen homies, free the ones behind bars

Regardless where you be at homie, reach for the stars!

The sky ain't the limit

We're better than that!

Dedicated to: Rest in Peace Cisco, Chente, Lil' Heat,
Smokey, Beniam, Lil' Turo, Goofy, Monster, Snoopy, and
all the fallen

-Gumby, Alameda

From The Beat: This poem might well be your best yet, and by best we just mean that you seem to have put all your heart, and all your love into one firey testimony. We changed your title, like you knew we would - because frankly we agree that you are "bigger than that." You're bigger than just the "homies" you pledge loyalty too, because you are speaking for an entire generation - White, Black, Latino, Asian, you name it - of young people who are fighting the system and poverty and their own darkest impulses. This a deeply human poem, in the best sense of the word.

Stereotypes of a Victim

Call me a convict
Call me a menace II society
Call me a thief
Call me a liar
Call me a delinquent
Call me a jailbird
Call me a dog
Call me a bopper

Call me whatever you want...you calling me this 'cause
You can't and won't know my name. And you'll never
Win at the game I play...I go...and people don't
Take the time know someone before they start speaking.
Let ya mouth open wide and keep my name in ya mouth
'Cause you gon' be the one that's gon make me rise to the top.

Networking is for myspace...so put my name on
Yo' page and put me in yo' top 8.
Keep them stereotypes going and them negative things flowing.

Thanks I appreciate

-Nunu the System Victim, Alameda

From The Beat: As much as we like the bravado of your insistent that the names can't hurt you, we would still like to see you get away from the environment that brings about these names in the first place. That means finding a more positive peer group than the one you were running with before you got locked up. Those are the people you should be "networking" with, no?

People I Would Forgive

People that I would somehow always forgive for doing something to me is my family and my homies. Family or family, no matter what, they're your blood. Whatever that happens to you, your family is always gonna be there. Like this one time, I'm not gonna say who in my family, but one of them beated me up so bad my whole face was all bruised, because I disrespected them. But after a week has gone by, I ended up forgiving that person. That's just who I am when it comes down to blooded family. It was some other reason to why that person beat me up so bad, but I'm not gonna get there.

Next is my second family which is my friends, you know even when one of us make a mistake that's hard to forgive. Me, I end up giving that person another chance or we talk it out together like how we were supposed to, like if something happened I could trust these people to even take a bullet for me like how I would do the same for them. We like brothers that's from another mother. That is growing up together. Well that's all I got for now, Beat, lates.

-Viet Ox, Santa Clara

From The Beat: We don't know the reason you got beaten so badly, but if the one beating you was bigger and older, we don't think any reason makes it right for an adult to beat a child that badly. What is your relationship with this person now? Would you ever beat your own child this way? But after saying all of that, we understand why you forgive your family for things you wish they had never done.

We All Share The Same Feelings

There is love
 Then there is trust
 There is success
 Then there is faith
 There is hate
 Inside there is anger
 There is happiness
 Then there is sadness
 When you're broken-hearted
 You become stronger
 In the world
 There is you
 Going through up and down
 Everybody different
 But with the same feelings

-Lucero, San Francisco

From The Beat: Isn't it strange that, even though we've all experienced the emotions you describe here, and even though we all bleed the same color when we're cut, we still find reasons to fight each other, to kill each other, and to hate each other for our minor differences rather than to celebrate and love what makes us all the same?

Bottled Up Anger

I think that people hate because there is something wrong with them or something has happened in their life. And over the course of their life they stored in bottled anger and they vent it out in acts of hate.

I grew up being beat, a lot, for no reason. So growing up I hated when someone got their hands on me in an offensive way because it reminded me of those senseless beatings over the years. That got me into a lot of fights growing up. It got to the point to when I was full of so much hate and anger that I was looking for the smallest reasons to get in a fight to let out some of that anger.

But when we stop and think about why we hate in the first place and think about the victim of your hate you might change your mind.

-Jeremiah, Alameda

From The Beat: We are very impressed by your courage to tell us readers that you were once a victim of physical abuse, and you inform us how it has effected you up to today. Given you recognize the problem, we hope you are getting the support and help to overcome this awful scar you must carry.

Reality Check

One day I'm good one day I'm bad
 One day I'm eatin' one day I'm broke
 Sellin' pills and weed you know I got coke
 The police laughin' like I'm some kinda joke
 Then they take my bundle and take my money
 Then they walk off laughin' 'cause to them it's funny,
 To me it's not 'cause my pockets bleedin'
 I'm on the next hype robbin' and thievin'
 Tryin' to hit a lick so I can get it quick
 All I need is to get me a brick
 But this my life this all I got
 Until I get life or end up shot.
 But that's all I got to say for today
 Tryin' to find a new way to get my pay.

-Eli, Alameda

From The Beat: The true crime would be to let talent like this go unnoticed, lost in the streets or the system. But you have to accept that at first your pay will be lower than what you can earn quick and dirty on the streets. Can you handle that? It's a certain kind of self-respect, you can hold your head high when you work for your money legit. You ready to step up to that challenge?

Can't Nobody Love Him Like I Do

My life is crazy, and it's funny how I keep on doing what I felt was right. But I had a chance to stop, just was too caught up in the fast life.

Now I'm crying "boo hoo." I got sentenced to seven months and I'm actin' like it's life, but the only part that's killing me is being away from my child's life. Not being there to see his first fall smile, his first sitting up, his first tooth. That hurts. But what hurts more is him not being able to see me and that hurts him at the stage that he is in. He needs me...to feel me, smell me.

Every morning, I wake up worried. When I get out will my son "know" me? But it's not nobody else fought to them, 'cause I choose to be in this predicament. If I would have been doing what I was, right I wouldn't be worried.

I get these little tantrums when don't nobody care, 'cause I didn't care, but while I'm sitting in jail, looking at these four walls all I got is time to think. And I'ma make sure I make my best move, because I been blessed. I stayed getting the shorter end of the stick but I keep on continuously doing the things I do

But it ain't about me no more it's about Don' Tarious Anthony York and ain't nobody going to care for him, love him, and treat him the way I want him to be treated. So I got to step up to the plate of a mother and take care of my responsibility as a woman. 'Cause can't nobody else be me but me and ain't nothing else better than a mother's love.

But I will continue to cry it hurt, and I get to open up "inside." The streets don't need me. My lil' boy need me.

I'm about to step up. I'm tired of talking about it. Thank you for listening to my piece.

-Lil' Domo, Alameda

From The Beat: And thank you for putting your thoughts and hopes and feelings down with such honesty and heart. Your little boy is very lucky to have a mom who loves him the way you do. What is your plan for taking care of him when you get out? And who do you have helping you?

Tidal Wave

Dear Beat: Last week I wrote that I was raw as.... I'm rapping. Here's Proof, and no cussing!

Understand me/like preschool work
 That I get around the same way that darkness lurks
 It's like Hamburger Helper ya' get it pretty simple
 Da Boi been raw you betta check ma credentials
 I'm sharp like pencils right before the first use
 And I'm here forever like a stain of grape juice
 I don't flow no mo' -- I more like tidal wave
 I done passed so many that I don't know what stage
 I'm on so can you please wipe me down
 And I been the king dog, so where's my crown
 Whomp Whomp whomp whomp like Charlie Brown
 U cartoon ninjas couldn't survive one round
 My rhymes astound like sex to a virgin
 And my pockets stay green like that frog named Kermit
 Look I did it with no cussin'
 Like my name was Peewee Herman
 Hahaha ahaha it feels like my tongue is burnin'.

-Da Boi, Alameda

From The Beat: What can we do but bow our heads down in honor of your style and the flow you bring to our pages. Now that we know how good you are, we'll be expecting updates each week!

Twelve Zodiacs

In the Vietnamese culture, there is something called the twelve zodiacs. It is a myth about twelve animals. These twelve animals were feared and respected by everyone. There were four animals that were the most respected and ruthless: the monkey, tiger, ox and snake. These four animals were the main animals of the twelve beasts. They controlled all the lands and the seas.

There were a lot of people jealous of them and wanted to take them over. They contemplated a plan to capture each of them separately. First they got the monkey, then the ox, and finally the tiger, so only the snake remained. But the monkey out-smarted them and he got free. Then the monkey and the snake gathered the rest of the animals and killed the people that captured them and then they released the ox and the tiger. This story is a way to show that when times are hard, you need to work together.

-Khi, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Thank you for sharing this interesting story from Vietnamese culture. It is so cool to see the intersections from different countries and communities. Plus, this story seems to have a real message for people who are trying to overcome obstacles.

My Mom, Crying

Today was court. I thought I was getting released. My moms is eight and a half months pregnant, about to pop any minute. I walked in to that courtroom thinking the judge would say: "You're released." I want to be there for my mom when she's in labor. I love her so much. She's the best mom ever.

Anyways, what I thought what was gonna happen was wrong. One more week, I heard the judge say.

I looked at my mom and she was crying, seeing her cry made me cry. I love my mom and I hope she doesn't go into labor till I'm out. I love you, mom. I'm coming home soon.

- Giggles, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Wanting to be there for your mother is very important, especially when she is going to have another baby. But perhaps there are other ways you can be strong for your mother so she won't have to come to court to see you.

I Don't Like Fish

One time, when I was a little boy, I touched a goldfish tank and it broke. I ran, then I got under the bed, and then I got under the covers, and then I got under the mattress, and then I got under the rug, and then I ran outside, and I got under the car. Then I got in the car, then I ran to the store and bought a Snickers.

When I came back, my brother's twelve goldfish was on the floor. The fish started dying. They flopped on the floor. Then I went back and poured water on the fishes and then they started floppin' again. I put two fishes in a large cup and they started swimming around in the water, and they're okay.

When my bro saw that his fish were dying, we started fighting and we started wrestling and cursing each other out, and then I ran away from him. Then my bro hit me in my eye, and I hit him in his eyes, and then moms whipped me, and then he went to jail, and then I went to jail, and that's why I'm in jail now—for that.

-Maurice, Marin

From The Beat: What a messy story! Did you get to save any more of your brother's fish? Only two? Maybe, if you'd scooped up the fish from the floor as soon as you broke the tank and put them in a bowl with water or the bathtub, you could have saved them all. But you sound like you did your best. Is your brother over it now? Are you? Maybe you could earn some little money and buy your brother some new fish and a tank, and have it ready when he gets out of jail. Would that help? What's next? Do you get out shortly? What's your plan?

Animal Story

I have a cat named Wolfie, but before I got him, he belonged to my neighbors that lived across the street from me.

My grandma used to buy cat food for him because he was really skinny, so every morning I would get up and call for him.

Then, one day, the people across the street were moving and they said that it seemed like Wolfie liked us more, so they let us keep him. When they would come back to get their stuff, Wolfie would try to hide from them.

Wolfie is really smart and old now. Sometimes in the night when he is locked outside he gets on my grandma's window and bangs on it so we will let him in. He is getting older now, so he usually like to lay in my grandma's backyard on the grass.

He is my first and only pet. He got his name because my neighbors saved him from the mountains. He was the last of his family, the rest of them were eaten by wolves. Well, this is the story of my cat Wolfie.

-Corina, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This is a beautiful piece that really captures Wolfie. Pets are important parts of our lives as humans, and you really show us the beauty of your pet.

I seen a gorilla doing sign language. I was very shocked that an animal can do sign language. I was surprised because I can't even do sign language.

Why People Hate

Everybody in the world hates. Nobody can't say they don't or haven't experienced hate before. 'Cause what can trigger hate is a past experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Like if a white person gets robbed by a black person, they will have hate for black people. Even if they say that it's the past, they will always have hate for black people.

Also, like nowadays, people say that they don't like the youth because we're out of control that's cold. How people label the new generation out of control, "a lost cause"? But anyways, dislike an' hate comes natural.

-Young Meel, San Francisco

From The Beat: We don't think we agree with you about always hating the whole race because you were robbed by one member of it. We think that's the kind of hate a person can overcome and get behind them. When you look back, are there things in your life that you will always hate someone or some group because it happened to you?

A Signing Gorilla

I seen a gorilla doing sign language. I was very shocked that an animal can do sign language. I was surprised because I can't even do sign language. If I could, I will be able to talk to him and that will be nice to do, to talk to an animal and ask him how he feels. I will just start a conversation and just talk to the animal. I will probably ask him, "How did you learn sign language?" and he will tell me, "When I was probably a baby."

-German, San Francisco

From The Beat: We saw that program on TV about the gorilla who learned to sign. Did it make you think about how closely related we are to that animal? Would you like to work with animals? What kind of animals do you like?

A Tale of Lions

The New Age Philosopher has some good news for the people within. I'm getting out on Monday. I'm sure some of those out there are a bit tired of my philosophy in action. Well, for those of you that this speaks true I have some good news. Today's writing of mine has nothing to do with the deep thinking I have that can only appear in my bored solitude. Today's story is a story of an enraged animal confined in a zoo, San Diego Zoo to be specific. It all happened many summers ago on a vacation, of which the only event I can remember is this one:

My family and I went to the San Diego Zoo to enjoy the fine points of the caged beast inside of us wanting and waiting to tear apart the... but that's the story for another time, another place, and certainly not in a place run by probation officers. We went to the lion cage this particular day and came across a rather ornery lion.

Whether or not it was because he was in a cage or because the zoo keeper would not allow for him to let a certain part of his anatomy out of it's cage, this lion loved to growl. Somehow, in a weird series of events that I cannot recall and would probably be quite dull and pointless to tell, my father and the lion managed to get into a roaring contest.

Now I cannot be sure, because I cannot yet speak lion, but either the lion was pissed at listening in a roaring contest, or the lion had vision problems and thought my father a lion invading his territory. The lion being, as I said pissed, decided to do the most likely thing: Take a piss.

Now, taking a piss is not funny at all and thank god that is not the conclusion of my story, for what a sad story that would be. No, it was the manner in which the ferocious cat pissed, that makes the story. The lion turned around and somehow managed to piss a good 10 feet straight towards us.

My dad saw it coming first, dodged out of the way with some James Bond move and my older sister took full blast of stinky lion piss in her face.

That is all my friends, I hope you all have happy ending like I will have. Well not like the story... I don't want you to get pissed on by a lion unless you can get it on tape and win some money on Americans Funniest Home Videos, that would be a happy ending. Goodbye-goodbye.

-James, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Well, this is certainly a grand finale to your writing in The Beat. Animals sure do the darnedest things ...

Courage

I know that people do courageous things everyday, things that go overlooked by everyday society. People say that being bad is easy and being good is hard work. So, for all the people out there who have to make that decision that today is the day they are going to be good, that is a courageous act.

There are also many people who choose not to be courageous and take the easy way out of things. There have been times in my life where I've been both. There have been a couple of occasions where I should have stepped up and went against the crowd. After those times, I felt like I let myself as well as other people down. The times I did something that most people would consider courageous, I really never felt I like I did something special. It just felt like it was something I had to do.

Sometimes courage can come in small things like asking someone out when you're usually a shy person, or being able to speak in front of a large crowd of people. For some people, it can be courageous to write in "The Beat."

- Jabari, Santa Clara

From The Beat: It truly is a courageous act to ask someone out. It's an act that takes a lot of heart and should be admired. But often asking someone out is the catalyst for starting a beautiful friendship.

A Special Thank You

I just want to say goodbye to The Beat, because when this is published I won't be here. And I want to say goodbye to the staff.

Thanks to the Beat for listening to me and being here for me. I've never had a person like that. Even though you are more than one person, I appreciate it.

Thanks also to the staff. I've grown up here. I was a young teen when I first started coming in. Thanks to Ms. Reardon, I'm a good person today. Today, I can say I am no longer a gangbanger. I want to say thank you to Ms. Trotter, too. These were the first people I met here in the hall. They've helped me to change my life, and today I am a better person. And I can call myself a young adult who knows the difference between right and wrong.

And to a special friend in here (you know who you are) - a special goodbye. We had good times. Not a day will fly by without me thinking of you.

-Angie, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Thank you for participating in The Beat and sharing all of your thoughts, dreams and emotions. It is because of participants like you that we keep coming back and are able to put out a publication. Good luck!

Respect

This is Casper, from Watsonville. I am going to write about the one person I respect the most. Don't get me wrong - I respect all people who respect me. But there is one person I respect the most. That is my mother.

I respect my mom because she is always sticking with me through good and bad situations. My mom is my best friend. When I need to talk to somebody, she is always there for me, always giving me advice. My mom has suffered a lot because of me and I am so sorry for all the pain I've caused her. Mom, thanks for everything you've done for me and sorry I'm not the best kid in the world. But I know you still love me anyways. It isn't your fault that I'm the way I am. I love you.

-Casper, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: This is a touching piece. We'd like to know how you plan to change things when you get out - not in general, but very specifically. You owe it to yourself, and to your mom, to have a plan for improving your life.

My Life

My life is wrong, it's not going well.
 Sitting by myself in a lonely jail cell.
 I know I did wrong, I understand.
 Stuck in my cell playin' "batman"

My life has changed, neither for the good or worst.
 Instead of being in second gear I'm stuck in first.
 There's no real help so I hold my own.
 My dad gone so I'm all alone.

I try to stay focus, be in the zone.
 Looking for a place I can call home.

- Dr. Seuss, Alameda

From The Beat: What an honor to have Dr. Seuss in our pages, especially to read that you recognize the problem in your young life. So, what next? What do you plan to do to correct this? Where's home? Where's the love?

A Plan For Success

Dis yo boy Mook F Holly, walk around and ask about me ya dig. But what's good wit' da Beat? As for me I'm good, tryin' to get out of JJC and stay out, ya dig. I'm tired of being locked up and listening to dis weak-ass staff.

When I get out, I got a plan for me to stay out of here, like staying away from da 'hood for awhile, go to school and stop smokin' dem grapes. It's more, but I don't feel like going through all of it right now. Main thing I want to do is STAY ALIVE.

Well Beat, I'm kind of short on words.

-Kenyon, San Francisco

From The Beat: Even without knowing the full plan, we admire what you've shared with us. If you do just the things you've promised here, you'll be so far ahead of where you've been. Good luck!



I Must Confess

I got shhh on my chest

I must confess, last night I was da ninja dat shot up yo' projects

Now I'm back in da 'hood sellin' rocks to da parents
Wearin' khakis and dem dyed Nike Checks (Forces)

I foster lived this life

Forster bust my chrome

My mom's left me in a foster home

I felt abandoned

Quick now, that Mossberg gone

I don't jump in da access without the Mossberg, homes

I been rappin' fo' a year an' a half, my life is real

Put da gun in his mouth, he gonna bite the steel

I was almost killed over two pounds of weed

Still ain't found dem ninjas but karma come quicka

Fo' the ninja on da other side of the gun

That's somethin' I gotta teach my son

-D-Boii, San Francisco

From The Beat: We hope you can teach him a lesson learned: that dying for weed is not worth it. Keep rappin' and you can teach a lot of people.

Mr. Lomax

I have this great counselor, father figure, and pal. He goes by the name Mr. Lomax.

Let me tell you some great stuff about this guy: He likes to help kids with their problems. When you're down, he pushes you right up. When you need stuff, if you're doing your program - he gives it to you even if it comes out of his own pocket. This is the reason I like this guy. I wanna thank Mr. Lomax for all his help, cause without him I would be the same person that I was when I first came in and who doesn't give a shhh.

Now I see things different. I work hard at school, I don't put people down and I try to help others. I also think twice before I do something. Oh also, right now he's working on getting me a three-day early release. Thank you sir.

-Believer, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Wow, you would never know all these great things about Mr. Lomax from his stern exterior. Thank you for highlighting his work and reminding all the readers out there how important good staff is to one's experience when being locked up.

Coming Back Over And Over: Running

What's up wit' The Beat? Me, wish y'all would bring the Beats so I got some nonfiction to read. I'm not going to write about the topics 'cause they didn't catch my eye. Oh yeah, happy birthday to me. I turned 17 on Sept. 9.

I been in the Max (Unit 7) now for a min. and still can't understand something. Everybody talks about how they want their freedom, how they deserve it. But when they get out, they come right back. Me, I don't know what it means or how it feels to get out 'cause dis my first time, and I been here six months and go to court in October. But I know I won't be getting out then.

But I see these people that get chances. They go home. Then they come back. People go to group homes and they run 'cause they can't do the little easy time. I rather be in a placement or group home doin' time than in here because this is annoying, and you get recycled air. No fresh air. Nothing.

Look out to the outside through a little window you can't even open. You eat the same courses of meals over and over until you know the menu. You want to watch TV but can't because you got to be in your room most of the time. The only good thing I can say is I'm getting my credits for school. That's the only thing. Everything else is not useful.

But people still come back 'cause they run from a group home or violate probation and other dumb shhh. My social worker tried to get some group homes to interview me, but my probation officer turned them down. I was hot when I found that out.

I don't get it, though. They sit and talk about what they would do when get out, and end up coming right back 'cause they want to go back to "Da Block" and see what's happening. When they should know nothing is happening but the same stuff that got them in here.

Me, yeah, I want to see da females and the homies, but forget that. I want to go home first. See my family, take a shower/bath, lay in my bed and wear my own clothes. To sum it up, be free!

-Gold M, San Francisco

From The Beat: What did your PO tell you about why he wouldn't let your social worker pursue group homes for you? Is it because of the seriousness of the crime, his own personality, or just that he doesn't have enough information yet to know if he can trust you or not. What does this mean for your immediate future? For some people (not many), coming here for the first time is enough of a dose of reality to make it the last time. It seems to us that you may well be one of those few.

Taken Away At Any Moment

One thing I've learned recently after being detained in the Alameda County Juvenile Hall is that there is no way a person can fully appreciate what they have, or who they have, without experiencing life without it or them.

My life consisted of my mother, the bravest woman I've ever met, my three younger siblings who I've spent most of my life taking care of as though I'm their second mother, my boyfriend Dante, and my friends from school.

My mom and I have always been close, except for recently because she doesn't like my boyfriend. Always having my mother with me, by my side my whole life, I took advantage of her by having Dante over at the house. When she told me not to and then, having a bad attitude towards her when she got mad at me for not listening to her. She gave me everything I could ever need to survive and be loved, yet I ran continuously into the arms of the man that put me in Juvenile Hall.

I sit in my cell, day after day wishing I would have given my mom that extra hug before she left for work, or a goodnight kiss to rest her mind before she lay her head down every night.

Advice for anyone who finds themselves turning their back on the people that love them: keep your loved ones close, because they could be the only ones who can keep you out of places like this.

-Jordon, Alameda

From The Beat: Like the song says, "You know it always seems to go/ that you don't know what you got till it's gone." But you haven't lost too much, because you'll have your freedom soon. But we are curious, why didn't your mom like the boyfriend? Moms are usually pretty smart about this - maybe she saw something about him that you couldn't, or wouldn't?

Courage Is Strength

Courage is on my mind
 my brother is a courageous person.

I was willing to fight a loser for talking.

My brother told me to be the bigger man and walk away.

That was a sign he has courage and has a strong mind.

I was being weak. I learned a lot.

-Derrick, Alameda

From The Beat: Good for you, for listening to your brother. Excellent piece!

Gun's Blazin'

Guns blazin'
 Heat risin'
 Bullets burnin'
 Gun powder stickin'
 Bodies fallin'
 People screamin'
 Thoughts scattering
 Police coming
 Handcuff cuffin'
 Detective talkin'
 Cell door closin'
 Judge hatin'
 Jury reading (25-Life)
 Moms cryin'
 Life's over
 All over a murder

-D-Boii, San Francisco

From The Beat: Go back and examine every line of your poem, and you will see that your conclusion, "Life's over" sounds like only one life is over. Murder always takes the lives of many people in many ways, not just the one who dies, or even just the one who pulled the trigger, but all who loved both of them. Murder has shattered their universe as profoundly as it has shattered yours.

My Thoughts In A Beanie

Ya better wake up before you don't wake up
 My time stopped on my Jacob (watch)

My Tommy killed Jacob

Now I got time to make up

And all these crash dummies

Need to stop wearing make up

And stop the fake up

Before you get your face pushed up

You need to inject the needle of knowledge

Into your brain

We losing what we gained

Just to gain what we gained

I just clean the scope and take aim

And wham, I am aiming at Jesus

And we're connected as one

But who believes us?

And these white people be, like, "Who needs us?"

If when we die, the streets leave us?

We fall for girls who look like street divas

My people dying in these streets

By street sweepers

If you ask me, "Dead or alive?"

I rather be neither

And the devil rather be meaner

I don't mean to act like this

But it's just my demeanor

We shoot each other over who's cleaner

Now we tryna get money

Just to buy the Beemer

I am in the mood

Where I can't decide what to do

And like Rust said

"This life be actin' real brand new"

-Dark Side, San Francisco

From The Beat: You write a beautiful, tender, tragic lament to your homies and the streets that are eating all of you alive, Dark Side. Even though your Jacob (your watch) your time in juvy is being killed, as you write, you're almost off the Ranch and free again. Then how are you going to respond to the drama that the streets put out? We hope, when you get out, you'll be in the mood to cherish your hard-won liberty and will protect it, no matter what.

I Was A Youngsta

I was a youngsta

Around seven years old

My older brother was coming from work

He stepped down to the stairs for the streets

And he pushed me and told me to get in the kitchen

Me, being stuck like glue to him

I followed him, trying to go outside

He slammed the door in my face

I cried, opened the door...

Seconds later, I'm screamin' on the street

"Don't kill him, he's my brother"...

He kicked me

Once I fell to the pavement

I heard a revolver..."Pa pa pa..."

My brother got shot

But as a youngsta

I was a G... ha ha ha

I'm still a G

-Vaga, San Francisco

From The Beat: You tell a frightening story in a beautiful way. But we have to say that if, after watching your brother get shot, you still say you're a G, then you're still a youngster too. Time to grow up a little and realize that there's so much more to this world than what you have been exposed to up to now. Don't give it all up because some slogan like "I'm still a G" sounds important. We've seen far too many youngsters never get beyond that stage. Don't be one of them!

My Trails

I was born in Dallas, Texas and lived there for six months before I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There, I moved from house to house, getting kicked out because of money problems. I moved at least ten times in one year because of money.

I was living with my mom and sister in one-bedroom houses, sleeping on couches and sometimes the floor. I didn't know much about my dad because my mom and him weren't on good terms.

I ended up moving with my grandparents for a year while things got more level. They lived 2000 miles away in Chicago. I liked the Windy City, but I left so many things back home. My girl, friends, family, and my life.

So at the age of twelve, I got one hundred plus dollars, bought a Greyhound ticket, and ran away from Chicago and from my grand parents to go back to New Mexico. It took three days and I finally got there, moving in with my girl and going to school.

My mom was supportive, but I knew that it would be best if I were not to live under her roof.

I did alright in school, but I never liked it. I got a job at this valet place that paid ten, plus tips an hour at the age of fourteen. Started off at the bottom and when I got my drivers license, I started parking.

In the middle of all this, I broke up with my girl and moved into my own place with my friend Dustin, my work partner. So then I saved up enough money to move to California and live comfortably for a good amount of time so I could find a job and go back to school.

I dropped out of 11th grade because I was trying to support myself. I got my GED the day I dropped out and added more hours.

I moved to Oakland three months ago and got locked up because I was with people that robbed a house and I was involved. I got caught with stolen property and now I have been in the hall for a month and getting sent back to New Mexico because that's the only place where I have guardians to watch me.

To be honest, I want to go back to my original home.

-Martin, Alameda

From The Beat: You had to deal with a lot of change and instability at a young age, and you got caught up in some bad choices here, but those things are behind you now. Hopefully you have learned from this painful experience and you will stay out of trouble from now on, and find a new way of relating to your family. Best of luck.

An Act Of Courage

What's up Beat? Not much here, just getting ready to tell you guys about a time I had to be courageous. Before I got locked up, I was out on the streets, messin' up and goin' down the wrong path. Then, when I got behind these walls, I knew I had to make a change, because this is not the kind of life I want to live. So I had to stand up to myself and be courageous and tell myself I can do better and turn my life around so that I could be a successful young man.

At first, it was hard to believe in myself because I had been doing wrong for so long, but I just kept pushing myself and telling myself I could do anything I put my mind to. Now I believe I could do anything and everything I believe in and there is no exception too high.

-Josh, Alameda

From The Beat: Your optimism and hope for the future is inspiring. Remember that the internal struggles you experienced when you "stood up to yourself" don't go away and don't get easier fast. We hope that you will remember your words and your promise to yourself during the tough times ahead. You are learning a lot about yourself right now, and yes, you do get to determine what kind of person you want to be going forward.

Strong For Nothing

I believe we as a people are some of the strongest younstas in a very long time. You got some people that don't go to school but are smart or smarter then people who go every day. Some people in special education that are smarter then anybody gives them credit for.

Some people will never had a job and never will, but count more money then those who go to work everyday. With all this talent we still can't see how "the system" or the "American Government" sets us up to fail as people of color, all color.

Some see but fall in the trap trying to be like everybody else. We don't just fail in these traps like some think.

The system studies us, on ways to make us go to prison, or wind up dead. Young black men are being targeted by the system, the math shows the average black man will live 24 years.

People would kill another person for words, five dollars, stupid stuff like this is worth dying for? We want to kill someone because I hit him first, but he won the fight. But when someone kills yo' brah, you shoot the hole block up? The Bible says "do unto others what you want done to you."

If three groups have conflict the only way for the weakest group to control the stronger two is divide and conquer. This is what has been happening since the start of this nation. If we as a people can learn to stick together we will be able to move mountains, but until then the future of our people looks sad. The government will try its best to stop the young of this generation but if we continue to let them.

We are strong, smart and wise for nothing. We need to get focused on doing the right thing instead of going stupid an getting' dumb.

-Wake Up People!, Alameda

From The Beat: As a youngsta, you are definitely seeing the light, and doing your part to educate the young foolish ones who find themselves trapped in the system. We hope you are now on a new page, given we haven't seen you in a couple weeks.

Hate Is Born

When you ask me why do people hate, I think people hate themselves.

Since people hate themselves they make fun of other people

because subconsciously they see themselves in the person they hatin' on.

We feel weak on a subconscious level so if I could make everybody focus on his big head and the way he walk

nobody will look at my faults, and when they do see mine nobody will listen to him because everybody knows what's wrong with him, so he can't talk.

The world we live in likes bad or evil over what is good or godly.

That's why if he more mature and walk away from a fight he a sucka,

if you talking hella shhh and he ignore you he a mark. A lot of people don't like the fact that he more mature or she look better,

or he got more paypa so they make reasons in their mind from jealousy,

or no reason at all and start looking for reasons not to like, and make people not like them. This is how I think hate is born.

-Kyshon, Alameda

From The Beat: Powerful observation!

True Courage

Courage some people think they have courage just because the people around them has courage. It's times you can have good courage and sometimes it can be bad. It's crazy how people around you can make you have courage but when it all comes down to it deep down in their heart, they know they don't have courage.

They may have some but not enough when they had when there friends was pumping the courage into there spent. It's just if your doing to have courage inside of you, because that person is not always going to be there when you need the courage to stay alive. You make the path to take.

-Meech Boy

From The Beat: What moment in your own life required the courage? Have you ever felt like your own courage failed you? Or like someone else didn't act with the courage you'd expect?

Why Do People Hate?

Why do people hate. Ninja's hate for no reason. They hate when they see a ninja doin' big things or even if a person is younger. An OG who ain't got much hate to see a younger person doin' better then them some. People just hate 'cause it's in the blood. Then another reason why people hate is 'cause of funk and the ninja's you or they run with. Like if somebody rob or shot you, you would hate them with a passion.

How do I deal with my hatred? I like to smoke my thoughts away or show my face in church.

-Keith

From The Beat: It's good that you try to fight your evil thoughts (the person they first bring down is the person who has them) but man we wish you'd stick to legal ways of fighting them. As you know, we want you out of the system, not stuck in it!

My Future

College is not for everybody. I always wanted to go to.

College is for those who is trying to take education to success. My education is turnin' out to be just the way I always thought about it. I'm going to a JC Chabot college to study Fire Technology and to get a B-A in Biology.

I see myself ten years from now having a child, a four bedroom house and two cars. I'm going to become a fire fighter and also a surgeon.

I'm going to push this to become a surgeon and also I would like to study sociology.

-Jermaine

From The Beat: And when that happens, we'll be reading about your success in the papers, talkin' about "we knew him way back when." Hold on to this dream, make it come true!

A Second Chance...

...is what I want, but I only had one shot at completing my group home. It all ended 'cause of my mistakes. I was thinking, if I show off, maybe I'll get the attention I want, since I don't get it when I'm good. So why not say "forget you" one time to this staff to give me some attention or why not AWOL.

Even though I won't get the attention I want, I'll feel good cause I got attention. Just give me a second chance to show you that I can really do what I say!

-Lil' Indian

From The Beat: We hope you got this second chance. And we also hope you find other ways to get that attention you deserve. What about just asking? Pull a staff you like aside and say "I'm going through it, can I talk to you" Or write to the Beat! We'll read and publish all your thoughts and pay attention to them for real!

Dog And Cat Fight

An animal story I remember making my dog and cat fight

my dog was full blood red nose
the cat was black

it was funny seeing the cat getting beat up
then my dog bit it on the neck and started shaking him up
then I broke them up and when I pulled my dog it bit me on my arm.

-Rodolfo

From The Beat: You need help too. What is this about watching a weaker animal get nearly killed by your pit? This is sick. Did you learn anything from this, given you dog bit you?

Hating, I Don't Get It

I don't get why people hate on nobody, I mean I guess it's just in people blood or some shhh. As far as me, I don't gotta hate on nobody cause I'm a popular individual and I am unique.

I don't gotta hate 'cause I paved the way for myself to be who I am today. I am who say I am.

I have a lot of haters but I need haters to let me know I'm doin something right, especially in jail because I use things for my own benefit. Hatin aint even me doe I don't know what that is.

And if u don't believe me ask about me on the outs, because I got everything I want. I don't get it but man I guess it's just inherited or something. I am who I say I am ...

-Lil' Tonio

From The Beat: The more confidence a person has on the inside, the less of an impact other people's hate will have on them. And so what you're saying is that you have deep self-respect on the inside that keeps you from being affected by outside haters? If so, where does that self-respect come from, how can others find it?

How I Really Feel

First hand second thought this is how I really feel
It ain't about being young fly flashy showing yo' grill

'Cause you can get killed or robbed ending up as a memory

I lost a couple of mind frames like I lost homies

Yeah it's sad to lose another young educated brother
To the block mind wasted on drugs and some other

Not like the system pleading guilty for a potna
Then three week later he done lost that close potna

Dang it's like tragedy gone off this ecstasy
Tryin' to ease pain with his t-shirt right next to me

Crying, tippin' a bottle see smoking on a Newport
While rollin' the weed up tryin' to get on 'cause life is short

Damn you got to think about it
Memories running tough, as I see his body

Thinking why did he go young man this ain't even right
While I'm pouring liquor out at this candlelight.

-Javance

From The Beat: This poem burns with grief and passion... it's not a candlelight though, it's a bonfire and a blaze. We need this kind of passion, because it's a war out there, a war for the futures and souls of our young men and women. Are you prepared to be a part of that war? We need you.

A Game Of Love

Easier to Hate Than Love

People hate cause it's much easier to hate then to love.

Real hate comes a dime a dozen, and hate is everywhere you go. There's haters and people that just hate life.

And once you grow up in a community of hate it's hard to love anything close enough to see. Now me personally I don't hate unless I fell hated. But then again I don't love too many people eatheir.

So I put my self in the way that if you ain't messin' wit' me in a real way then I ain't got too much a love for you. I also think love comes with a little bit of hate and hate comes with a little bit of love. 'Cause down here every body besides my family that I love & hate. And my enemies that I hate I don't want him to die.

And I love beef too... it's just exciting to me.

So I love to hate you.

-Marley

From The Beat: This smart and thoughtful piece winds up in a frightening place. People become addicted to all sorts of things that are bad for them: pills, drink, coke, and the way you write, it sounds like you've become addicted to "hate," and the rush of conflict and drama. Do you think that's possible?

My Fault, I Knew...

I surprised myself by coming back
risking my life and running back to that dead line track
over and over I tell myself I'm gone change

but I wound up doing back wrong
and in my mind I tell myself this won't last too long

I only want to be big in life,
but my mind is double-twisted with me nice had my
body

can't focus right behind these walls
I know this happened for a reason to come to the hall
was moving faster in life off track

My life was doing a twist out my back

I'm young and have a long way to go

This madness one day gonna change, oh no!!!

-Lil' Papa

From The Beat: The madness is the voice of collective insanity/a combination of hate fear and vanity/but you can rise above/because it's too much in this world that you love/the change will come when you decide to take it/decide that number one you want to make it. Peace.

My Last Time

This is my last time coming in here. I turned myself in because I'm turning eighteen next year and all of my fun and games are over. I'm 'bout to start a different life and do what I have to do and stay out of jail.

-Festor

From The Beat: You are right in taking your upcoming birthday seriously and facing facts now. Turning yourself in is a hard thing to do, but now is the time to make a plan for your future so that you can enjoy your freedom as an adult.

What The Next Ninja Got

Why do people hate? People hate because they don't got what you got.

I feel haters want what the next ninja got...Why hate on the next ninja an you can get it yourself? People shouldn't hate why hate get yo' owns...

-Joshua

From The Beat: Have you ever been hated on for what you had that others didn't? Or the other way around, have you ever hated on someone, just because they had someone you wanted? What happened?

Reasons For Hate

Ninjas hate 'cause they mad they ain't got what you got.

If you eatin' and yo ninjas ain't and you stop messin' wit' them then they gone start hatin'. It's different ways of hatin on ninjas. You could hate on ninjas eatin', hate on ninjas cause they getting out of jail or a situation and snitch on them, or hate on a ninja who you got a female you want.

-Deonta

From The Beat: Anyone who would hate you for getting success or doing well couldn't possibly be a true friend to begin with. But how do you know which friends will stick with you to the end, and which ones could turn out to be haters? How do you know who to trust?

Why Hate?

I feel people that hate on one either is either very jealous of that person or of what they got, have, or done. Some people hate on others also because of "he say she say" that starts a very big hatin' issue.

Last but not least, a lot of people hate on other just because they have nothing else to do and they just want to be foolish at that moment and time with they homies.

I feel hatin' on others is a very bad thing because truthfully there's no reason in the world that you should be hatin' on that person.

For what? Why? Because they have something that you don't at the moment and time, it's not like you can't get the same thing. I feel that if you put your mind to it and have faith also save your money you could get the same thing also without hatin'.

-Daniel

From the Beat: The stuff you write here is almost revolutionary. Imagine if all the people in the world that are down and out stopped hating on each other and decided to focus on bettering themselves. It would turn the world upside down - and make it a better place too.

Stop Hatin'!

People hate probably because they see somebody with something that they don't have and they want it so they might hate on you.

Or if you got a enemy they gone hate on you. It's funny though 'cause a ninja would be shinning and the next ninja would just hate and I would just kick back and laugh at these ninjas.

All you suckas stop hatin'. Straight up.

-Roland

From The Beat: There are some great insights here, but one question: If you call someone a "sucka" to tell them to stop hating, aren't you kind of hating by calling them suckas? Doesn't the end of hating start with each individual?

My Favorite Animal

My favorite animal is an anaconda because it swallows its prey whole. And it's really sly and smooth and sneaky and has no fears.

Like I seen on the Discovery Channel, the anaconda killed and swallowed an alligator. And my second favorite animal is a trapped door spider. 'Cause it puts the perfect disguise and it waits for the perfect second to strike or it won't. If the spider feels it wants to kill you with one attempt then it won't attempt.

It'll wait till the next animal comes to eat.

These two animals are just like me.

-Marley

From The Beat: Well, one thing we'll say, is that both the anaconda and the trapdoor spider are wild animals that do better in the wild than in captivity. No animal - or human - belongs in a cage, so we want to hear more about how you intend to get AND KEEP your freedom.

Staying Mad

People hate cause they don't like you, or they want something you got. When you doin good or when you got something they want.

Sometimes people hate when they want problems wit you. No lie I hate if you my enemies cause I hate them. It's all types of hatin' anything you stay mad about is hatin'.

-Marcus

From The Beat: Maybe that's what they mean when they say "to err is human, to forgive, divine." If you can get over the hatred and forgive people who have wronged you, it's a way of rising above. Can you do that, rise above?

The Zoo With My Girl

When I went to the zoo. It was cool, just me and my girl. And it's was before I come up in here... damn, I seen hella animal did hella stuff, just had a good ass time.

Laughin', jokin', runnin', playin', just doin' it.

-Derrick

From The Beat: The memories you have of the good times are exactly the memories that will keep you on point while you're doing your program. Besides the zoo with your girl, what are some of the happiest times you remember?

Courage!

Courage isn't something that people are born with nor do people get it overnight. Most of the time, courage is found in your heart.

I really don't remember seeing acts of courage, except for one time when my homie Dajaun, who was only 5-2 and about 120 lbs at the time, stand up to a 5-11 220 lbs football player. Ever since then I respected him in all kinds of ways.

-Dexter

From The Beat: Wow! We would love to hear the story. We hope in the end, he was ok, and it didn't get violent.

Hate Me!

Haters gon hate regardless. That's human nature.

I need haters in my life.

'Cause without haters there's no sacrifice

There's no reason for life if everyone respects each other.

Life's a game that's only won by thought.

But the game get hard if nobody's plain against you. That's like racing air or playing double dutch with one rope.

Haters live off misery and misery needs company. I'm living my life to the fullest and anybody hates me,

I respect them 'cause they ain't got no life

And ain't shamed of not having one.

I know I'm sucking 'cause I can cash out whatever for whatever

And people hatin' me 'cause they ain't me.

But look, though, life ain't about what somebody got, where they came from,

What they pushing, or how many

Knocks they serve a night.

Its about what you can do to change someone's else

Life in a positive way.

Live yo' life, not someone else's,

And the world would

Be a better place.

-Nunu the System Victim

From The Beat: As always your rhymes are right on time/but the negative motivation of hate leads to crime/You may think you need haters but it's the love that will

An Act Of Courage

What I'm in here for I'm in for murder 'cause ninjas is talking to them people. And because the homicide that my my lil bra was there so he would have went down to but I man'd up an took responsibility for my actions.

So now if I do do life which really don't want to. I'll know I'm doin' my time by myself an' not wit my Lil' ninja that wasn't even there.

Now, I know you thinking I'm stupid but it's more to the story.

-Marley

From The Beat: We could never think you were stupid, not after reading your intelligent and insightful pieces. But we do want to hear the rest of your story, because it sounds complicated and we feel like this bit you wrote up here just scratches the surface of what you're facing and going through. Next week?

Me and My Female

I been hated on plenty of times. Like, once I had this female right, she on me and she feeling me, but she the type that will tell you, "you better not be messing with other females," So I told her I don't mess with no other females, then my so-called patna hates on me, he gonna tell her behind my back, that I be messing with hella females and am playing with her feelings.

So to me he hated on me, and that's hate but at the same time I've hated on plenty of people, like I had enemies and when they will come through all shoot at them, so to me that's consider hated.

-Baby Q

From The Beat: Wait, so the one part that we don't know in this is - were you telling the truth to the girl when you said you had no other girls? Because the more we lie, the more ammunition we give to haters to use to bring us down. The cleaner you are, the harder for anyone else to smear you with dirt.

All I Do

All I do is think about you...

I think about your smile, how it lighten up my day when I just think about it.

All I do is love you more each and every day.

All do is want to be with you.

I think about your touch.

I think about your breath-taking kisses.

I think about our future together, our future children.

I think about how you tell me you love me and it make me smile.

I think about love we share...

I just think about you, Laila Mejia, all day, everyday.

-Lil' Zale

From The Beat: Thank you for sharing this beautiful love poem with The Beat!

Can You Handle It?

Now you know my name is Natay.

I am thinking that intelligent fly young lady, attractive,

Yeah, I am active, and a lot of fun,

I go, I got talent take a picture

Say if you cant handle it.

If I go there baby with you,

We gon' set it off

We go have some fun, baby, can you handle it.

-Tay Tay

From The Beat: We wanted way more of this flow, to find out just what makes you go, and hear what it is you know, that makes you someone worth a show!

Why Do People Hate

I don't really know why people hate. But I have a lot of experience with people hating. Some people like to hate on me and my girlfriend.

You know, I think people hate because they want what you got. They hate on me and wifey because we have strong love together and we are happy with each other. So, you know, haters don't have anything else to do but hate on us, but I really don't care, because to me, that's haters' job: to hate. So really I'm looking for some haters by the end of this year.

Wifey and I, we are just going to love each other more and laugh at the haters and just let them do their job.

-Lil' Zale

From The Beat: What do you mean when you say you have these haters to find by the end of this year? It's true that happiness is the best revenge. Don't let them bother you, because by tracking down someone who doesn't like you could turn real ugly. Do you want to find yourself locked up again? Be smart!

I Can Tell You Why People Hate

People decide to hate because they wish they was that person. Or they mad because they ain't that person. What they also decide is to tell rumors about you just to make them look good on they behalf. But it's also about how the person does things that they wish they can do.

But what they don't know is that what brings hate towards them and makes them look like straight suckas, but why hate when you can strive to get on they hype? Why show envy and jealousy?

When it comes to hatred, someone has to die because if it just continues then it's going to lead to warfare. But sometimes when it gets serious people take it as a joke and that's the one that has to go.

-Domo

From The Beat: We didn't quite understand your last point. Do you mean that people if people take the joke too far, they deserve warfare? Or just that it's important not to treat these conflicts as a joke? Otherwise we think we got your other points, and agree.

This Hate

Why do people hate? I think people hate people because they really don't allow God to enter their life and when that happens, people get filled with hate.

I have had hate in my life, but I'm just praying to get that out of me and I'm so serious about it I even been praying for people I count as enemies.

The only advice I could give to people is just pray on it hard because I think that's the only way to overcome it.

-Dexter

From The Beat: So many of the world's great spiritual leaders, Jesus, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr., have believed that compassion and forgiveness can heal wounds and even end wars. We hope that when you get out, your prayers will lead you to take actions to spread peace in your community.

Why Do People Hate?

People hate because they don't have things other people have. That still don't give them a reason to hate. People can get what they want if they just work for it, and not tryin' to take it from anybody else. Just work for it and you wouldn't have to hate.

-Festor

From The Beat: Do you think there is more hate in rich neighborhoods or poor neighborhoods? Or, do people always want things other people have no matter how much they have already? Why does it feel better to earn something than to steal it?

That Ain't Good

Now that ain't good
He can't even go in his own hood
Now that ain't good
He afraid to stay in the hood
Now that ain't good
His family moved out the hood
Now that ain't good
His life isn't safe in the hood
Now that ain't good
He ain't even known in the hood
Now that ain't good
He don't even belong to a hood
Now that ain't good
When A ninja gotta put on a act
In front of people just to
Be cool you know, it ain't
Good when a ninja saying he's
From somewhere but ain't never
Lived or been around their in
His life I mean he probably
Drove by but didn't get out
The car, it ain't good when
A ninja banging a squad when
Most of them ninjas don't like
Him, it ain't good when a ninja
Gotta hate on the next ninja just
To feel good about his self,
It ain't good for a ninja to act hard
When inside he's soft

-D'tay

From The Beat: It ain't good when a young man of infinite talent uses his poems to hate on fellow detainees. It ain't good to glorify being "hard" or "real" when there's so much else to value in life. It ain't good when a smart and good-hearted writer uses his pen to tear others down. We are all soft on the inside. Soft, scared, afraid that if we show how we really feel we'll get laughed at or worse. Be the poet we know you are and shed some light on what happens inside the human soul. Peace.

Driving Is Fun

My cousin works in the Oakland Zoo, so I told him I wanted to go just to use his car. When we got to the zoo, I told his lil' brother to tell him he was hungry so my cousin told me to take him to eat. Instead I went to pick up my patnas and went to my ex-girlfriend's house. When I got there, his dad came out hella mad so I got back in the car and almost ran his ass over, but when the day was over I was thankful we ain't get pulled over or worse, crash.

-Blast

From The Beat: Sounds like it could have been a lot worse than it was. Did it take some time to earn your cousin's and uncle's trust again? Did they forgive you?

Hating

People hate on people cause they don't like them, or they are getting more money then the next person, or maybe cause the person killed their people, so the person tries to hate on the next person.

It happens all the time in Oakland. You see it in jail, out on the street, even in our homes. Some hate on their brothers, cousins. I can't tell you why all this hating happen, but it do! It can be because the person's rims bigger then the next or cause of the spot they from.

-Unknown

From The Beat: What do you think might make it better? Is it because there aren't enough jobs to go around? Another reason? Is it just human nature?

Dumb Ways

Today is Sept 11th, 2007, and also is my lil' sister's birthday, and I as her old brother am supposed to be her role model, help her with school work, and also be her best friend that helps her through the thick-and-thin! But where am I sitting on the most important day of her life.... In Alameda County Juvenile Hall!!!! I could be there with her and the rest of my family and friends, but because of my dumb ways I'm in here waitin' to go to Sweeney instead for six to nine months.

-Kyle

From The Beat: When you get out of camp, you will have another opportunity to be a good big brother to your sis. She is lucky to have a brother who loves her as much as you do.

Releasing My Hate

In the world that I'm living in, we hate about different colors.

Well, I live in a world of gangs and we hate each other because of the colors and the hoods and stuff like that. That's why in my life I have hate for a certain type of people like a gang that's against the one I'm from, but at the time I'm getting tired of this 'cause we don't get nothing over hating, just trouble. That's what it is: looking for trouble. Like I hate them, they hate me. But I'm trying to leave all of this hate for these gangs 'cause I'm getting caught up all the time. That's why I'm releasing all of that hate little by little.

-Steven

From The Beat: Two things happen when young people get caught up in the gang hate machine: you make the OG's and the drug lords rich, and you keep the prisons full. In return, you get the following: stress, hateful feelings, a criminal record, and a high chance of getting killed, seriously injured, or locked up. Don't give your life over to the government (the system) or to the people who profit from these hood wars. You are right to be getting tired of the hate and the trouble. As you release your hate, and think about what's really going on out there, hopefully you will also choose to quit the game and choose freedom.

Bad Deal

My favorite animal was my baby blue-nose pit. My uncle gave it to me. When I got it, I named it Ghost because of the color it was.

A few weeks after I got it, my auntie told me we was moving and I couldn't bring my dog. But me not knowing how much the dog was worth, I sold it for \$20. My uncle was hella mad at me 'cause it was worth like \$200.

-Doddie

From The Beat: Sounds like a beautiful dog. What was the dog's personality like? Were you mad at your auntie when she said you couldn't keep it? Do you have a dog now?

Haters

I think the main reason why people be hatin' is they jealous or they wanna be you or they just mad cause they wasn't able to have most of the things you got. They broke, dirty, ugly, don't got no friends, and that's the main reason why half these youngstas getting killed or shot. 'Cause people be hatin' and the scandalous part bout it is that most of the haters be in yo' circle, be your closest patnas and I ain't gone say no names, but somebody just hated on me and that's why I'm in here now.

-Lil' Paul

From The Beat: It is a terrible feeling when a friend turns on us or sells us out. You don't want to get killed or shot, so what steps can you take in your life to stay safe? Do you need to take a hard look at the people you are associating with and figure out if they are really your friends? If they're hating on you, then you deserve better.

Courageous Pooch

He was a golden retriever

His name was KC,

We were best friends to the very end.

I was drowning in the creek

And he saved my life,

Too bad he died

Because early that day I got him a wife.

I miss my courageous pooch who kept me alive,

And I wish that he had survived.

I remember the nights when we'd stay up all night, watching movies in our power ranger tent.

He was the blue ranger and I was the red, we even had some matching outfits. Together we were Team Ranger.

It's hard to be a team of one.

Rest in peace KC.

-The R-Ranger

From The Beat: What a great story. It is to be a team of one, not just in terms of pets but in terms of needing to feel like we've got friends, true friends who have our backs. Have you ever thought of getting another dog?

How I Feel

What's up, Beat? I'm writing about my girlfriend, whom I haven't seen in two weeks. I miss her a lot and I can't wait to see her. When I was on the outs, we used to have a lot of fun.

She wrote me a letter, and when I got her letter, I was really glad that we are still in touch. I can't wait until I get out so I can see her. We always use to hang out and she used to spend a night at my house and we used to have so much fun. I really miss her. I just want her to know that I'm still here and I will always stay in touch.

-Festor

From The Beat: We hope that you will see her soon and that you can be positive influences on one another.

Hating

It seems like someone always has someone else hating on them.

There are many reasons people hate each other. If you have it better than someone else, they might hate. If you got more money, they might hate, too. If you swoop on someone's girl, they might hate.

I think the main reason why people hate is because they're mad at themselves for not having what the next man's got and they wish they could. I know a few people hate me. But I ain't trippin'. That just lets me know people jealous.

-R

From The Beat: You've got a good attitude. Don't let jealous people get you down.

Don't Hate The Playa, Hate The Game The Playa Plays

The advice that I would give people about hatin' is quit because it don't cause nothin' but a fight or more hate. It's been older people where I'm from hate on me because I was selling dope on their block at a young age. I tried not to let it faze me because all I thought about was getting my money.

-Lil' Jon Jon

From The Beat: Now that you're getting older, do you think about getting out of the game and away from the hate?

Not Enough Love

Why do people hate?

Because there is not enough love from their mother or father, or just the people they live with.

Why is it so much hate?

People change to sell things for they can bring something home to put something on the plate.

Sometimes people die because it is so much hate in this world today.

Why do people hate? Because they don't have a nice car, trying to be raw.

Why people hate?

Why people hate on someone else?

They can't keep to they self and for me,

I don't hate because I love everyone in this world today, please love and don't hate.

-Lolita

From The Beat: Amen to that last line, imagine what it would be like if we could move beyond hate, once and for all. Imagine if every man woman and child could read this poem and decide to follow what you say.

Voices/Poem

I'm goin' insane

Holdin' conversations by my lonely

I never feel alone because the demons take a hold of me

Slowly

Derailin' me offa my train of thought

So I pop a pill

Or sip something, so I can clear my thoughts

Somehow it seems like,

I'm only sober when I'm high

So I stay rooted

And search for answers in the sky

The voices have robbed me of my feelings

So now I'm numb all inside

So I look forward to the day

That I'm normal

That's when I die

-Sticky

From The Beat: Perhaps some of the voices are demons, but other voices inside you give life to your gorgeous poetry. Don't let the voices rob you of your feelings. Perhaps they can join forces...let your feelings wash away the numbness and fuel your pen.

All You Got To Do Is Upgrade

Some people hate because they don't got nothing goin' for themselves. Hate is hella bootsy, why hate on the on next person when all you got to do is upgrade?

Me myself, I can't stand that. That's not coo...

Some hate because they think if they're hating they gon' get power "or" respect, but you hate on me I'm gon' show you betta than I can tell you. But if I can see you ain't worth it, then I'm not gon' waste ma time.

Oh, yeah. Some people hate 'cause tha next person like you and you you talk to them, but they on you too. It's all jealousy too me... don't hate on a bad bitch

-Walker

From The Beat: So you're saying that the hate really comes from envy - people wishing they had what others do. What we call hate is maybe more like jealousy and competition. Do you think hating happens more when people are making money outside the law?

Why People Hate

I believe people hate because they have a lot of jealousy inside so they start to hate on someone. People also hate because they are mad at what the other person accomplished.

-Lil' Dirt

From The Beat: Nice to have you in our pages this week. Remember to keep it real, but you have to also keep it Beat appropriate, meaning, all people can accept.

The Courage of My Mother

I think my mom takes on an act of courage each and everyday, from each and every morning she opens her eyes, preparing breakfast for our family, or feeding or changing the twins' diapers, or even when she makes sure that I have everything I need.

She's the strongest, most courageous woman that I know. My mom has a lot of courage, because no matter what the situation or struggles we all may go through, she always makes a way. Every day she fights for all of her kids to live the life she never had. She makes it look so easy.

She never lets us see her stress, she never shows the sadness she feels inside. She is brave enough to conceal her depression. In my eyes, she's the most perfect woman I know, and I love her for that.

-Tristany

From The Beat: What a woman! Do you think you've inherited things from her - strength, forbearance, bravery? What ways are you like your mother? What ways are you different?

An Act Of Courage

Courage is, for example, if your friends want you to go with them to smoke weed and go on a robbery mission. First, you sit there thinking, "should I go, or not, then?" It's with you now when you tell your friend or bra's, "naw, it's good, I'd rather go with my girlfriend or to the gym to play basketball." That a lot of courage stepping up to your buddies, saying no and you about to do something else, because they go, "ohh, you are a mark or a sucker". So if you just believe in yourself, you can achieve your goals.

-Lil' Jesse

From The Beat: It can be incredibly hard, in the moment, to say "no" to friends. It definitely takes courage, and also the ability to remember what you're trying to accomplish in your life, whether it's avoiding violating probation, being a good example to a younger brother or sister, or just making yourself happy by staying focused and out of trouble. Believing in yourself is key, and trusting your instincts. Thanks for sharing this example and excellent advice with your fellow Beat readers!

Throwing Crap

One time at the zoo I watched two monkeys throw feces at each other. That made me laugh until my eyeballs hurt. They must have been throwing feces at each other for half an hour.

-Adrian

From The Beat: Nasty. Lucky they didn't wing it at you for laughing at them.

Money

Money on my mind all the time.

As the money goes up my heart goes wow.

A trick pays or a cokehead pays for some cocaine.

I'm on the block all day, but somedays I'll take a break.

Money goes around and so do they.

Money can buy things but it can't buy happiness, they say.

- Naya

From The Beat: You don't sound convinced....Does money buy happiness for you? Has it in the past? How much money would it take to get really happy?

Why Do People Hate?

Why do people hate?

Maybe it's 'cause of my beautiful face.

Maybe 'cause the way I am doesn't fit their taste.

Oh well, 'cause them hating is just a waste.

The judge hatin', givin' me too much time for a too little case

Stuck in a juvenile institution that use pepper spray; basically mace.

Can't wait to go home where I feel in place,
Someday probably go hate cause my J's' the two-color lace.

Why do people hate?

Is it 'cause of my size, my eyes, tsss you betta recognize.

Why do people hate?

Maybe 'cause they nobody, but I am, you betta ask somebody.

Why do people hate?

Maybe 'cause I got something they want but I've earned everything I got.

It ain't my fault they look like a knock.

Why do people hate? Maybe 'cause they think I'ma downgrade but really all that hatin' gon' make me upgrade I got it made while they just hatin' and probably dropped outta school & only getting laid. But I don't need to hate cause I'm smart, doin' somethin' with my life, and getting paid.

-Jocey-Bo

From The Beat: This poem is full of pride and great writing, and confidence and passion, but it sounds like you're giving out as much hate as you get... like you're defending yourself by putting down other people's life situations, school situations, and looks. Is that true?

An Animal Story

I have seen a strange thing about an animal. Once I seen a squirrel it was in a tree. All of a sudden it fell out of the tree, it laid there for a minute and got up and ran.

-Lil' Dirty

From The Beat: Yeah, squirrels definitely fall out of trees.

Courage

Courage doesn't mean you have to be tough
You could be scary and have courage.

-Lil' Dirt

From The Beat: That's true. Courage comes in all shapes and sizes

Coming From My Heart

Yes, the thing that made me courageous was when I spoke from my heart, meaning that when my friends was up to no good they asked me was I up for it, and I told them no, and they said that I was a chicken and scared, but I told them straight up that I wasn't down to do what they was doing because it was hella shady.

Another way of courage is like you doing something that you normally won't do, like in other words you being scared of something, but at that point you just don't care and you step up to the plate, or say what's right. No, it does not mean you have to risk your life and yes courage can be you stepping up and speaking your mind sometimes. Yes I was surprised, but also at the same time it made me feel good because I did something right.

-Francois

From The Beat: You capture the essence of having courage when you stood up to your friends who wanted to pull you into their dirt. Thanks for your thoughtful thoughts to our topic.

Haters Hate, And I Hate Haters

Why do people hate, discriminate and so on and so forth. Haters are fakers. Haters hate and I hate haters. Haters are broke-down and jealous, with nothing to do. Haters have no self-esteem or sense of dignity. They look and talk about others just because they're wannabees. Money, cars and big notorious things make people hate. Why do people hate.

They hate because of what they see and believe. Haters hate haters but they do the same thing -- to have hatred against someone is a strong feeling.

Love, rape, racial discrimination, poor, rich, you were hurt, or just have nonsense and pride. So you show hatred. Haters hate, they fake and one day I'll hope it will break.

- Naya

From The Beat: But if you hate haters, does that make you a hater too? Doesn't every hater think that the other people are the haters? Hit us up with an answer next week.

Stop Hatin'

Man, I be askin' the same question too. Why do people hate?

The reason I think people be hatin' is because they feel that the person who is getting all the money and who is livin' big is doing thangs, so they be hatin' and sometimes they be snitchin' also and that one thang you do is not snitch because you can't do what that person who got the money is doing. What's the point of snitchin' and hatin', just come up and do something to get money and shine, but shine the right way and STOP HATIN!!!

-Jerald

From The Beat: Hatin' and jealousy go hand and hand from your thoughtful piece. Best to you in not getting caught up in such an ugly web.

Back in Jail

The first time I came to jail it was June 17th
I got out August 8th on EM (electronic monitor)
I stayed out for one month and one week.

Then failed EM;

Six days later got arrested for a 2-11

I came back on September 7th

now its September 11th

I'm back to ACJH (Alameda County Juvenile Hall)
anyways what's up with you Beat?

-Porkey

From The Beat: What's up with us?? We should ask you what's up with you? What the hell are you thinking? A 2/11!? Come on wise up and get right!

Thoughts On Hate

When people hate on you
you supposed to stay two steps ahead of them.

When they hate on yo' shine,
you supposed to shine even harder
don't let nobody stop yo shine.

I learn that from my dad as a youngster.

Now he is in Folsom Prison for life.

I never let a hater play wit' my life or my money
that's why I got so much

I don't slip up and stay up.

-Monibo

From The Beat: Money doesn't do you any good when you are incarcerated. Dirty money is bad money. Living the life you live could cost you like it cost your dad, his freedom forever. Wake up youngster!!

Hate and Misery

People hate because they miserable. A lot of people hate 'cause they ain't got nothing better to do. They hate the fact that you coming up and handling your business and they ain't got nothing. Some people hate 'cause they just ugly.

Part of it may be because of how they came up and what they were taught growing up. I don't think it's no sense in hatin' on other people. I feel that if somebody doing they thang then just let them get they shine on. I really ain't worried 'bout people hatin' on me, the way I feel I must be doing right in order for people to hate on me that much, the more they hate the better I'm doing.

-Rayna

From The Beat: Yes, people up the hate when they're feeling the worst! Do you ever feel tempted to hate on people? Like, have you ever been in a position where you felt like someone else had it goin' on and you didn't, and you felt bitterness on account of that?

Don't Bother Me

Well I've been hated on by lots of people but I like it 'cause it make me go harder like I remember when people was calling me a broke lil "ninja" then I start getting' money bought a whip and now I can say I'm stuntin' harder then my daddy and yo' daddy ya understand me!

-Elijah

From The Beat: Be smart Elijah when you get home, this is not a life to live, in and out of jail.

RIP To The Homies

Man RIP to all my ninjas that's gone Dirty Mike, Kels, Sin, Ramto, Blink, and Bean man we all love all you ninjas. Man, Thug In Peace y'all never forgotten baby.

-Moe

From The Beat: This tragically long list of your dead loved ones. If you want to stay up, not get kept down, the only way to do it is to walk away from the whole death style that took your homies away. Peace.

This Don't Seem Real To Me

What I see through the windows
I'm used to it being the mall, cars the movies the world
When I'm on the hill that I be on now,
I be the young man in all blue.
Alameda County tatted on my white and blues.
Is that what I be, or the young man calm smart and true?
To be who I am, this got me going crazy.
My mind is in negative thinking. My body is weakening.
When time goes by, it's hard to do positive changing.
This don't seem real to me.
Everybody is on the same thing to me.

-Berkeley

From The Beat: You have control over your future. Over who you become, over where you end up. Just reread this wonderful poem! Does it sound like it was written by someone who can't be positive? No - you have the ability to see the truth in your situation, even if it's a bad one, and that will help you stay true to the positive side of you.

RIP Tony

Rest in peace Tony we love you everybody here misses you. When you passed away, everybody cried. You will always be my big cousin you always be a "g" I hope I see you at heaven, your little brother will always love you and we miss you. Rest in peace Tony.

-Danny

From The Beat: Thank you for putting these loving words in The Beat. We are sorry that you had to lose your brother. Did a lot change in your life after he left? How did you cope?

Why Hate!

Why you hating on me you all hating on me

You all don't like me, but I ain't mad 'cause I don't like y'all either

-Lil' Dirt

From The Beat: We love that you write, but if you want to get published in The Beat we need you to step up and keep it open for all to read, not just your homies.

Why Do People Hate?

People hate because somebody else got something they don't got and that person want to take it, like for example you might be on Deuce's, 45 candy paint, slap, and somebody want that because they ain't got the dough fo' it. Or maybe they do, he still want it just because, that's why it's important not to be slippin' while you ridin' somethin' wet.

I know I hated before everybody did, even if you thought you wasn't, you was, I hated on people everyday on the outs, I see a car I mean a car worth jacking, I'm gon' say I can get that if I want it.

I hate and think nothing of it, but when it happen to me I see how that person feel that I hated on and wanna go bad!! But that's how it is.

Is there a cure for hate? Me personally, no, because as long as there somebody to shine, there's always someone to hate, but you know I don't really hate ... I do my own thang.

-Lonnie

From The Beat: On the other hand, almost everyone locked up is there because of something connected to hating on someone, either rivalry, stealing, fighting or some other thing connected with hate. It's almost like hating always leads to lockdown (or worse), so maybe the person who suffers the most from the hating is - the hater?

Haters Give Me Confidence

The reason I think people hate is 'cause they like something you got or they don't want you to have it.

To me haters give me a lot of confidence. Why? 'Cause someone say you can't do something, which make me wanted it even more. But sometimes haters do too much just to hate on a person, like killing that person or the person you are with etc...

Have I ever hated on anyone? No, me I don't hate, the reason I don't hate is because it's a waste of time. Plus my big brothers tell me I don't need to be a hater, 'cause I will make more enemies.

-Dookie D

From The Beat: It's good that you have brothers watching out for you with good advice. What other kinds of advice do they have for you? Are they in the game, or do they make their money legit? We ask because, as you know, it's easier to tell right from wrong if you have trusted role models around to show you the way.

Strive!

I would like to tell everybody incarcerated
To strive to do better
And be aware of their surroundings more,
So they can stay outta
Whatever is keeping them detained
Never knock nobody for they hustle
Hustle by any means necessary
To achieve yo' goal in life.

-The Young God

From The Beat: The only thing we'd add to this is that if you can make your hustle legit (a job, a program, a scholarship to college) then you can turn around and say you beat the system for real, and raise yourself up. Too many people have been brought down by their own hustle, and we'd hate to see that happen to you!

Hello

I love my girl and she love me
But I got a lot of girls that love me,
People like me because a ninja stay fly
And drive hella cars on rims and be with hella people
But I just need to go to school
When I get out of camp
I'm gon' end this because
I get back to the money stay out of jail
And get this money the right way

-Lil Nario

From The Beat: It's good to hear you want to make positive money. We hope it's true, because frankly, there's a lot more to love about you than the fact that you "stay fly" or drive a bunch of different cars. You have spirit and good will and mostly, a good heart. Who are the people who value you for that?

Alone

I had courage when my mother told me she wasn't support me no more. Some ninjas get down I held my chest up high wit' only eighty dollars in my pocket, bought a quarter and was on, supporting my self and takin' care of myself that's the only way I could remember courage.

-Elijah

From The Beat: What a story you have to tell. We hope you step up and tell us more what life has been like for you on your own, living on the edge, or so it sounds.

Bear And Princess

I had a dog called Bear and Princess, they are mix dogs and there mixed with rot, pit, and wolf. They are four months and they are big for there age.

My mom and I take care of the dogs, they are mine but if I don't have any money to buy the dogs some food she (mom) will buy the dogs some food and if we both don't got it my little brother will buy it. So they always eat so they never be hungry. Only when we forget to feed them and that's not all the time once in a while.

-Johnny

From The Beat: Yes, to have pets we must be responsible and feed them one to two times a day. Sounds like your big dogs need plenty of food and it sounds like everyone in the family pitches in.

A Wild Night

What's up Beat? I'm still up in here waiting for my release, you feel me. That's all you could do up in here just wait.

I'm going to tell you about a lil' story, one time I was with the homies in the park it was late night, like two in the morning. We was kickin' it, smokin' and chillin, you feel me?

At 1:00 am we was on the corner and some rivals came and we started bustin and then they left and it was 2:00am and then a car came by the park. I said I was 'bout to go check them, but my older homie said no. I said ok.

The police came and we started running 'cause they always mess with us.

A little later my patna went by this parked car and they started bustin' and I said, "damn who is that? My patna got shot and I said damn that could have been me.

-G Man

From The Beat: Now that you have a child, will you change your ways so you can be a part of your child's life? Sounds like you very close to falling further into the traps, hat is if you go back to your old ways. What's your plan upon getting out of the system? Best to you!

Ghetto Life

I used to live a ghetto life, smoke weed, gas ninjas and shoot dice. The corner is all I knew, where they sold coke and pimp those
Slapping them all around the bay area just to let them know,

That this street shhh is no joke,
Money over females for what I know, ninjas riding through the town tipping on fours.

Profilin' through the light not giving a hell,
Tryna to get that knock for a few bucks.

You can take a ninja out the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of me. I live a ghetto life.

-Marco

From The Beat: Do you live the whole ghetto life, though? The sound of oldies playing on a boom box in the late afternoon, the smell of barbecue at a family party, the tears of mothers at funerals, the little children out on the streets cussing like twenty year olds? Be true to your neighborhood, sure, but if you want to be truly "ghetto" you have to care about helping out your neighbors, not adding to their fear and pain. Peace.

People Want To Hate On Us

Why do people hate... Ninjas hate because they want to be you.

Me and my ninjas get down, and that's why a lot of people want to hate on us. We love the hate because it don't make us do nothing but shine harder on them ninjas.

Hated by most, feared by few, but respected by all.

-Young Money

From The Beat: Tell us this - where do you see you and your "ninjas" in ten years? Close your eyes and picture it... where do you want to end up, and how do you intend to get there? Because the path you're on right now needs fixing if you want to truly shine.

I Want To Go Home

I am not going to talk about those topics because I do not know what to write, so sorry about that, I am going to talk about what's on my mind and what I think all the days that I am in my room, locked up. I hate that.

I think about my family and what I could do differently to not be in jail. I am always thinking on positive things because I want to go home with family. I also think a bit about my brother and little sister I miss them so much, like nothing else, I love them so much.

I was always with my brother all the time. He is thirteen and my sister is two years old. I want to talk to my brother, I haven't talk to him since I got here.

I hope I get out and go home, not to a group home. I hope God will give me a chance and let me go home.

That's all for today Beat, thanks for coming.

-Marco

From The Beat: Why should the system send you home? Do you deserve to go home, given what you allegedly did? What will you do differently? Make the right choices for your family!

Animal Planet

My favorite animal sore is about a monkey and I watched this on Animal Planet. They made a monkey walk on a ball and then walk across a rope and then they put the monkey food on the tree to see what the monkey did first. That was interesting.

-Marjon

From The Beat: Monkeys are very interesting to watch. Sounds like you enjoyed it.

Less Fortunate Hate?

I really don't know why people hate, probably it's because they are less fortunate. For example, if somebody else gets new shoes that you've been wanting for a while, they go hate by saying, "those hella ugly." You know damn well they like them too.

I had a lot of people on me, like when I'm trying to get at a female that I like. Other ninjas hate by saying a lot of negative things about me to the girl, just so they could have a better chance of getting with her.

To hate people my relatives hate that's not me. If any of my family members got problems with people I just let them settle it until it's my time to jump in it.

-Lil' Marcus

From The Beat: We appreciate the three examples of hate you share with us. The one we question is why would you jump into a battle that's not yours? Sounds like at first that's not what you would do, then you say you need to jump in?

My Snake And Iguana

My favorite animal is a snake because they're different and I like different things. When I had my snake it was very cool and sometimes it was mean, and when I fed my snake it would strike at my hand real fast. I've learned about my snake when I sit down and watch it, I find it amazing how it's muscle squeeze around it's prey.

I have an iguana, it's crazy and sometimes it's really cool. When you sit and watch how they be in their territory and how they feel, it's pretty cool. Reptiles are my favorite animals 'cause to me they are different and better than most animals and that's the only animals I like.

-Jonathon

From The Beat: Two unique pets you share with us. Do you still have them? How does your family and friends like your pets? Who got you interested?

An Act Of Courage

When I was in the third grade there was a bully in the school and he would pick on me. One day he pulled a knife on me and he told me to give him 10 dollars ever Friday but I didn't have it.

I remember that my mom gave me 10 dollars for lunch money and I had to make peanutbutter and jelly sandwiches so for the rest of the school year I was giving him 10 dollars in until I was in fourth grade and one day he told me to give him my 20 dollar bill and I said, "no!"

He sockd me in my face and I started crying and then I knocked his feet from under him and he fell on his wrist and it broke and he was crying and screaming.

-Johnny

From The Beat: Did the bully stop asking you for money? Hope so. Sounded like a painful time in your young life.

Mad People

I think that people hate because there mad or have something against someone.

I used to get mad a lot and not like a lot of people. But I realized that life is too short to always be mad and to have so much hatred, because then you would never have time to be happy.

I think hates a very strong word and you should think before you use it.

-IC

From The Beat: Thoughtful on-topic piece. Tell us what did it take for you to realize that life is too short and being angry didn't help matters? What do you do now, when anger creeps into your life?

The Life I Chose

The life I chose is a difficult one. It has gangbanging in it, drugs, money and crime. Sometime I do the things I do for a reason, and sometimes it's because I was being stupid.

I chose to gangbang and do drugs because I wanted to be apart of something, I wanted to be like my father too.

I felt that gangbangng was for me. I could have homeboys that would have my back and be down for what ever comes in our way.

I had it made, barbeques with my homeboys and females, blunts, beer, cigarettes, music, everything you would need to have a good time. I got tatted when I wanted to, and smoked and drank when I felt like it.

I enjoyed gangbangng, and there's other things we did that I can't mention.

My life was good 'till I got locked up. Now I'm here, writing this paper, instead of barbequing, smoking, and drinking with the homies and other females.

I miss it a lot but I just get to thinking when I'm in jail is this how my life will always be forever, or will I change before it's too late? What would you do?

-Convict

From The Beat: We appreciate your thoughts and your honesty. As for us, since you asked, what we would do if we were you would be to take a good look at our old lifestyle, examine where we are today, and make a plan and figure out what steps you must take to stay out of the system. There are plenty of ways to have a good time, and not be tied to a gang. You're smart enough to figure this out. The hchoice is yours sooner than you think!

My Hate

People be hating when you got something say you have something they don't have, they hate.

People hate for different reasons from the clothes and shoes you have.

Like my cousins, I hate that he have more stuff than me

People be hate on my brother, by snitching to the police because they snitched he's looking at 25 to life

we all be hating -

I hate on family members too, because the way I'm treated

the girls are treated better than us boys,

only my grandmother treats the boys right.

She always shows me love especially on my birthday

-Donte

From The Beat: OK, you share with us several examples of how one hates. As for those hating on your brother, well, if you are in the victim's shoes, well you are sure not gonna turn a blind eye if you know who possibly was involved in the crime. If he didn't do it and was arrested, hopefully justice will be served and he'll get released.

No Problems Please

If I hated someone or something I would try not to start any problems or create any conflict, because if we would fight that would make it worse. Like if he would win then I would come back until I would win. And if he would lose, he would try to win. I would try to be friends with him or something. If that couldn't happen I would not even try to be friends I would just put every thing aside, and we don't have to be cool but lets not fight over something stupid. If that didn't work and if he wanted to fight me, I would let him hit me first then I would kick his Ass, but first I would try to warn him that I don't want no problems.

-I'm Peaceful

From The Beat: We like your thought process. If more people attempted to work things out in a peaceful way, think of how mch calmer life would be for all.

Jail Sucks

Jail sucks. I hate jail, I don't know why I'm back here, and just for stealing an iPod, but I should've ran when I had a chance. But I didn't, so now I'm here, but I go to court in two days and hopefully get out.

What do I miss most? Man, I Miss my family, forget my friends 'cause they ain't probably thinkin' 'bout me, but man I do miss them all.

Man I miss my mom, dad Aunt bothers and sisters us like I'm not never getting' out. But we got to get out sometime, somehow but hopefully I get out Thursday.

I took it from a lady, I got ten blocks cause when the police came I didn't run cause I thought I was innocent. But I did comment a crime. The police told me he caught me like a needle in a haystack. Did I know what that means? No, but now I know.

-Lil' C

From The Beat: On a charge like this you might even be out by the time your piece runs. You could look at the police catching you as a stroke of luck, because now that you got caught and had to fight a case, we're hoping you never get caught up in the system again!

Be A Leader

Wassup Beat, you know I am still here locked up. But yeah if I was a leader I would be smart about it, and tell people to do the right thing. Have programs for youth, kids and jobs, letting them know jail ain't the place to be at. 'Cause it's a lot of youth people try to make money in the outs. If I was the leader I would help youth - people from 12 and older, 'cause that will be good for them.

Look at me - I messed up and hit a house for my money, now I stop I have too much to go on. Now I look at it and it ain't gon' last too long. Think about it - go get a job and be smart about it. Put some money in the bank, so it could last long.

Now that I'm getting older, when I get out is gon' be good for me, because I am not gon' be a follower. I am gon' be a leader, and I'm gon' be a man about it. I'm not gon' do stupid shhh. I have a little brother to take care of, and a mom, so next time I will know better.

Now I know I got money to do what I want to do, that means be leader. People, stay out of the BS, be a leader about your life. Get your money in the right way. Get a job.

-Phan

From The Beat: We're with you on this - have you got a job yet waiting for you when you get out? Is the money decent, and is there some room for advancement? And what about school?

DA's Hatin'

Today I could of got released but the DA hated on me.

That broad said I had a gun. Did I have a gun? Man, hell no. She don't know a damn thing about me. Talkin' 'bout they don't know if I'm a really go home if I'm released! What type of shhh is dat?

Man I'll never ever be a DA. They don't know nothin', but always say the worst. DA's ain't cool, their career is based on lockin' ninjas up. DA number one haters!

I go back to court on the fifth, then they tell me where I'm goin from there. Hopefully I go home but if not I'ma thug it out.

-Lil' Loe

From The Beat: No doubt, we'd much rather imagine a smart person like you working as a public defender, helping people fight their cases. What do you think? Could you ever see yourself as a lawyer of the people? As for DAs, well, they have a very important role to play, and that's to represent the people, but when you are on the other end of the stick it's sure mighty painful. Do your part and stay out of such predicaments!

My Two Beautiful Queens

What I really miss about home

Is walking in the door,

And my lil' sister running into my arms

Reading to her before she go to sleep and kiss her.

Taking moms out to eat

That's just me always caring for my two beautiful queens.

My car, picking up my BM

Taking her place she wants to go.

RIP Emmitt, Drew, Rell

-Isaac

From The Beat: This piece was so touching and heartfelt that we just had to turn it into a poem - a poem celebrating your family.

Stop Or Go

If you can call to heaven, man who would you ask to speak to

God, Jesus, or one of your people?

Sixty seconds to talk, man what would you say

I miss you I love you hope to see you someday

I will live life, I won't let it live me

You ain't gotta go dumb, you ain't gotta hyphy...

While living you gotta make many decision

Ignorance or wisdom

Stay free or go to jail

Or death or living

Honesty or lies

Hate or love

Left or right

Family or friends

Deuce deuces or macs

Pimp or get pimped

Make money or let it make you

Savage or a mark

Stop... now go... now slow down

I'll have thoughts Heaven or Hell decided by your ways of living

If you doin' wrong you betta make some betta decisions.

-Mangy

From The Beat: This poem is deep in all the ways that make you think. The choices we make now could effect our whole future, like you say. So starting with yourself, what new decisions would you like to make?

Another Chance

What's up Beat? This that kid and I'm eight months strong and I'm still keepin' my head! Well today I'm gone come wit' real life stuff. What's on my mind is my future. I really do got a lot of plans for my future and I need the time away at ROP to get my mind right.

I know what I did was way wrong but I'm glad that God gave me another chance at life to correct my many mistakes. I'm 'bout to be eighteen now and it's 'bout that time to turn it positive and help other people not go down the same route I took.

I feel like I been there and did just about all. So I feel as if though I can lead someone in the right direction but it really starts wit' the person. I ain't the one who talks about negative shhh and what I done did but I been there and through all the hurt and pain and I'm tired and if I can prevent someone from going there, so be it.

-Lil' Dro

From The Beat: You might just be taking those first crucial steps towards true manhood ... at 18 you can still control what your future might be, and make it as dark - or bright - as your imagination will let you. What parts of the changes can you get started on even while you're at ROP?

Going To Samoa

What's up, Beat? What's crackin'? Me, just chilln'. But yeah, it's ya boy Chunky just writing this paper. But anyway I'm hot right now.

I went to court yesterday and my lawyer didn't even show up. I was so mad. Not only that, I could've got out too, but I didn't have no passport so I couldn't go. Now my next court date is September 25, '07. I'm going to Samoa. I don't want to, but at least I'ma be wit' my brother Jeremiah.

Anyway, let's jump to my day today. It was coo'. I got to play basketball. I scored like 34 points, but yeah, I'm hit ya back next week. Oh yeah give a shout out to my brothers. Love yaw. Keep ya head up. Coo'-coo', let's do it. (LOL) Peace out.

-Chunky

From The Beat: Some American tourists spend thousands of dollars to vacation in Samoa. Why don't you want to go? We hope you find things to love there... maybe even a slower lane of life.

Why People Hate

I think people hate because they are probably jealous because the things that you got, like nice clothes. Or, you probably have an I-Pod, and they may want to fight because they want your I-Pod because they probably don't have one. They want yours, and they end up taking it, but I will fight before they take my stuff.

-German

From The Beat: We agree that jealousy may be one reason for hate, but can you think of any others? Do you hate anyone? Is it because you want what they have?

Problems

Damn! I really just messed up big time! It's the alcohol I tell you. I was doing good. I was going to school. But once I'd hit that bottle everything went down the drain. My girl left me. My family probably now are ashamed of me. It's just that I honestly don't know when I'll decide to get my shih together.

-Angel

From The Beat: When you decide that your girl's love and your family's pride is more important than your drink, that's when you'll get your shihh together. You don't have to convince us that it's the alcohol that leads you here. We believe you. But you are the one putting the bottle to your lips, so you are the only one who can get control of your downward spiral. Deal with your alcoholism. Seek help. Try AA or some other group process. Don't underestimate the power of alcohol to ruin your life.

The Old And The New

The old face I used to know
Is the one I used to love

You say you changed for the better
To me, you changed for the worse!
The new one I know, it's the cold one
The old you used to hold me tight
Now you won't even look at me twice
You say you want me more than ever
But I feel that you don't even love me

I think about you day and night
Remember the days you used to say you want me
Now you're just a memory
To my ex-baby

-Danielle

From The Beat: Lost love is bitter, but it's a bitterness that most all of us have experienced. And you know, we get over it. When that boy comes along who truly sees you and what you have to offer, you'll realize that the one who's now cold wasn't right for you to begin with. Trust us. This too shall pass.

An Animal Story

I have a Chihuahua. My mom named my dog Estrellita. Well, every time I would go to sleep when I was at home, she was my alarm clock. I swear, exactly at 8:00 she would wake up and start bugging me, biting me, and everything, to wake up. She so cute.

-Lucero

From The Beat: Did you feed her when she woke you up? We know how much a pet like Estrellita can mean. Does she comfort you when you're feeling down? Who's feeding her now? We bet you miss her!

It's Always Raining On Me

It's always raining on me!

Everywhere I go, I see

Frowns, not one smile

But my money continues to pile

I let my soul bleed

On this paper

So you can feel

Where I'm coming from

Baby gurl

Just because I bang

Don't mean I can't love you

So, grab my hand

And follow as I lead the way

You're everything I'm missing in life

Long black hair

Nice body

Got you lookin' right

Until I get out

This is just a kiss

To the girl in my dreams

-Menace

From The Beat: Beautiful, tender love poem. You've never written any poem that's so sweet before. We hope the one who inspired your poem appreciates it.

Too Gone

What's goodie? Dis be ya boy, Elmo, and I came up wit'
a lit' somethin' before I get out: Chea, man, I can't wait
to get home

To sit back on ma throne

I may be wrong

But I was too gone

When I did what got me down

-Elmo

From The Beat: You can see that we changed your last line because the one you gave us is not Beat appropriate. When you go home, do you think you'll allow yourself to be "too gone" again, knowing where that can lead you?

Being In My Cell

I'm in my cell, in 100-degree weather
The time I'm spending, nights and days
Thinking I would be locked up forever

I want to see my father, but without having him come to
this place

My mother's face, filled with the disgrace
I know they love me through thick and thin

They support me in other ways

They told me to stand tall

But got to go, bye

-Dri

From The Beat: How can you show them your appreciation for standing by you? Of course, telling them how much you love them means a lot. But showing them means a lot more. Do you plan to make any changes when you get back with them, so that you can stay with them?

Me And You

We used to be the best of friends
Even the cutest couple
We did so many things
Always got in trouble

I called you every day
When you didn't answer, I was sad
People were always hatin'
What we got, others wish they had

The things we did, the trust that grew
The growth of friendship, lost our love
The look in your eyes, your beautiful smile
You were my angel, sent from above

I loved the time we spent
I know it was true
God put you here
So it could be me and you

-Cinnamon Roll

From The Beat: How could you be "the cutest couple" but always getting into trouble? What so cute about that? Apparently, the trouble you got into was enough to let the authorities take you from him so that you're left with writing sad love poems from behind walls. We hope you think about this carefully so that when you walk out of here, you won't risk losing this love again!

Let Them Hate

What's up Beat! People hate because they want something you have, but they can't have. People hate because also they don't like where you from, so they hate. And that hate might go as far as death or even jail. But them haters are still going on to hate, so let them hate. I like when they hate "ya dig".

-Vago

From The Beat: But forgetting them for a minute, what about you? Do you ever hate? Do the same definitions apply to you?

You Run Through My Head

When you cry, I cry
When you smile, I smile
When we spend time together
It's goin' be worth your while

When you come to see me
When we lay in my bed
When you start to talk dirty
You run through my head

When I feel your body on mine
Just us rubbing together
I don't want you to stop
I want this to go forever

Now I feel you on me
Just slowly workin' it
Now it's time to stop
And that's goin' be it

-Alex

From The Beat: The physical love you describe can be the most wonderful thing in the world. So why did you put something else above that love by giving the system the power to separate the two of you by doing whatever it was you did to get here?

Jealousy And Envy

In this world there's always gonna be hate, envy, and jealousy. Let's start with the haters. Whereva you from or live, there's always gonna be a player hater hating on yo' game. What you say is you ain't nothing but a playa hater.

People that envy you is someone that is jealous of your game, someone that would try to knock your hustle down.

-Big Oso

From The Beat: Can you focus on your own feelings? Are you ever a hater? Why? Where does your hate come from? Tell us a lot more than this!

Why People Hate On A.F.B.?

What it do with The Beat? Me, shhh, just chillin', keepin' it lit all the way to the fullest. But I'm go tell y'all some reasons why people hate on the A.F.B. because I shine, baby. so I shine on hatin'-ass ninjas all because ya boy got dip, females, fame, respect, whips just the whole nine thug.

You can't be me, but you could try to shine from these other ninjas, ya heard. Hate it or love it, we on top and we go shine homie until our heart stop. You know this just a way of life so this what you gotta live with every day. It ain't go stop. Just like this beef shhh. Me personally

I don't hate on nobody. but it's some people in this world that I hate very much. I know it's a lot of people that hate me but your gonna respect me or... Even though I can't say the name of my block but I could tell you this, I think my block is the most hated turf and the homies is very much hated ya know but respect it 'cause you ain't go check it an dat that's on the 'hood.

-Young Bundy

From The Beat: You know, AI, you could have taken this piece somewhere deeper than you did. We wonder if you (and we) felt hate long before you identified with any block. We're kind of bored with the "my block is more hated than your block" testimonials. We'd be more interested in something you hide when you right like this, and that is your own thinking.

A Strong Word

I feel like people who hate are people who lack respect for thereselfs and others, and haven't really experience a family's love or and other love in that matter . My mom always told me hate is a very strong word so use dislike. Rip Ma (Stormy).

-Cuba

From The Beat: This is an interesting definition of hate. Do you mean people with self-respect don't hate? Hmmm

Hate The Game, Don't Hate Me

I'ma go ahead and tell you I love you, but I might not mean what I say. Tell you everything you wanna hear. That's what you call spittin' game.

-Savioso

From The Beat: So spittin' game is telling lies?

Fighting Someone Younger Than You

Someone wanted to fight my friend that was older than him, and he was like my age. So I said, "Fight me. Let's see if you can fight somebody your own age. Why you picking on a little kid? You scared to fight somebody your own age?"

-German

From The Beat: We wish you had added some more details. Why did the older boy want to challenge the younger boy to fight? What did he say when you told him to pick on someone his own age?

A Dog Fight

I remember one day me and my homies got invited to a dog fight. The two dogs dat were fighting was a blue nose pit vs a Rottweiler mix tiger stripe pit. When me and my homies seen the dogs, we all bet money on the Rottweiler mix. We only bet 25 each. We bet on the 'Rot 'cause he was more bigger.

-Vago

From The Beat: When you write about betting on a dog fight without telling us what happened (who won? Etc.), it's like holding a bone just out of reach of a dog. Give us more.

Brotherly Love

I have been taken under my big brother arm. When he was out he was always telling me go to school and be on home for curfew. He stayed on my back every time I was getting into some shhh. He was only two years older than me, but he stayed schooling me on how the game should go when you a young ninja.

My big brother got caught up and is doing six months in the Ranch. But when he called me before I just got caught up, he told me just be good, keep my head up, and that he love me. When we both get out, I know he still go be there for me. I love D- Baby bra.

-Joe Dirt

From The Beat: What can each of you do to keep the other from getting caught up? Can love keep you together?

A Shaggy Dog Story

Q-vole Beat? What's good with you folks? This be the homie Termite coming from that max unit-7. I'ma tell you about this one animal story I know.

I remember me and my homie were just kicking back drinking hispeeds, and my boy saw a dog coming. My boy is scared of dogs and I didn't know. So I told the dog to come here and my boy started running. I guess the dog smelled his fear and started giving chase. That shhh had me rolling. I was drunk but that shhh was hella funny.

My boy ran down the block and back. I thought he was drunk but he got sober in a quick minute. As soon as I saw that, I was chasing the dog because I thought he was gonna bite my boy. I pulled out my butterfly knife (I never leave home without it) and chased the puppy. Well, the lady that owned the dog called the police because I had a knife. But I ditched it before the cops came.

Well my boy turned out ok, but I was rolling. Well a'ight then, Beat. I'ma holler at you.

-Termite

From The Beat: Is this incident related to why you are here, or did this happen long before you got here? We're kind of glad you didn't get a chance to use that knife. What happened to your boy and the dog?

Why Do People Hate

Why do people hate? Now that's a good question... Damn, I think people hate because they jealous and they want what the next person got. Cats hate on me 'cause I'm my name ring bells everywhere and ninjas wanna be like me. I got cats hatin' on me 'cause I do my thang and I do it the best. But no matta what nobody say, if you want ta hate like T.I. say and just do. But I'ma end this thang off like dis — please do you and let me do me. And don't hate '

-Young Nut

From The Beat: We wish you had put down a few more details. For example, do you have anyone or anything that you hate? Is it out of jealousy? Can there be other reasons to hate? If you do your thang "the best," what are you doing here?

Is It Goodbye?

You were my first love
From 2003 'til a year back
I try so hard to not feel love for you
But I got hurt by you
I got backstabbed by you, too
But at the same time
You were as sweet as caramel
Your physical attraction was
Finer than Daddy Yankee
Your touch brought reaction and attraction
I can't lie to you, or myself
At times I miss you
At times I think of you
Is it good-bye?
I know I'm with someone else
And, yes, I do love him
But if you could understand
My first love was you
But it might be time to say good-bye
Because I gotta leave you alone
Because maybe
You already forgot about me
So is it goodbye?

-Vaga

From The Beat: Your first love will always have a special place in your heart, no matter how many other "loves" you have. At the same time, admitting that the love you once shared is no longer in the picture doesn't mean that your relationship can't develop in other ways. Sometimes, maintaining a true and lasting friendship becomes even more important than that hot passion that defines all first loves.

Times Up

I been in here seven months doin' nothin' but waistin' my time. Well, it's over wit', ya heard. I'm 'bout to get up out of dis shhh hole here and get back on my shhh. First I gotta knock 12 months out, ya dig, then I'ma be back for good. But in da meantime till den, I'ma get myself together, ya heard. I'm try ta get back into sports so I could be fit.

-Jr F

From The Beat: Besides getting your body fit, what else do you have to do to "get yourself together?"

Why Do People Hate?

My advice to those haters is to if you see something you like or something you want that someone else has, is to get it how you live and strive your best at it to get whatever it is feel me. Hating no good in ya blood ya know. If you don't got it, remember there's always a way to get it ya know. So fo' all you haters, it's either get down or lay down! Yadada!

-Jay Pitt

From The Beat: Your philosophy of take what you want is based on one of the oldest of all social principles: might makes right (the strongest win). The problem is — and you should know this if you take a good look at where you are — there will always be someone or something stronger than you, so what you take you will lose, and more.

Praying

Man, I can't wait to get out of here. I am going to do something good when I get out. When I talk to my son I feel bad because I can't be with him. All I do is pray and pray

-AJ

From The Beat: We hope you do get out of here soon. But what are you going to change about your life so that your son can have you with him?

Think Before Your Actions

What' 'sup Beat? Dis ya boy Lil' Gutta. But yeah, I'm just tryna get out da halls and be a real man and show ma nephew how to be better than me because right now I'm in the halls in U-2 holdin' it down for the block. Some ninjas think I'm soft but yeah, bra, you got the wrong ninja.

And I hate being locked behind doors eatin' da same food, waking up to da same cold breeze, getting room time over dumb-ass shhh. All I got to say is you gotta keep yo' head up, or you gonna be dead. So think before yo actions.

-Lil' Gutta

From The Beat: Are you here because you didn't think before you acted? Or are you here because you were holding it down for the block out there? Whether some ninjas think you're soft or some think you're hard, have you started to think?

RIP Mommy

My mom is my most important influence in my life. I know she hurting to know that I'm in here and it hurts me to know that I'm the reason she's hurt. I love you mommy.

-Darrin

From The Beat: She knows you love her, Darrin. And she loves you, which is why she wants you to stop hurting yourself.

Not A Bit Sorry!

Yo! What up Beat? Dis Young Rockafella, an' today's topic is sorry! I don't like sayin' sorry 'cause I'm not. Anotha reason I don't like sayin' sorry 'cause I don't admit to shhhh. I'm not sorry. So my mom stressin' 'cause I'm in here. An' most definitely not sorry fo' da victims or da people I took, stole, lied, cheat and harmed. Yo Beat, I think 'cause I got a heart like a 'frigerator. Smoothies.

-J-R

From The Beat: For us to believe your self-description, we'd have to believe that you've never felt sorry for anything... and we can't believe that. In a play called "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare, one character says, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks." Well, we think "the gentleman doth protest too much..."

To My Mother

I'm sorry
I didn't mean to
I just want to be free
I didn't want to hurt you
I just wanted to be me
But I was wrong
That's not me
I'm sorry
You was right
I was wrong
I should've stayed and never ran
You my queen I'm your son
I "love you" to death
You the best thing that ever happen to me
Without you I'm nothing
You the reason why I breathe
I just want to say that I'm sorry
I love you to death mama

-J-Citi

From The Beat: Of course she knows that you love her. And you know that she loves you. That's why she counsels you. That's why she tells you not to do some of the things you do. It's time to listen to this person who has sacrificed so much for you.

When I Get Out

What up Beat? Ds is Twon just sayin' what it do. When I get out, I'm going to stay at the grouper dis time an' knock it out because I been messin' up hella much lately, and ma PO be on me 'bout dat. When I get out, I'm goin' to stay out and do what I gotta do to stay out 'cause I'm tired of dis place. And I could be doin' hella shih if I was out right now.

When I knock dat grouper out in six months, I'ma be on ma shhh an' I'ma be stackin' ma dough when I'm at da grouper so when ma six months is over wit', I'ma leave wit' some dough. And then I'm goin' to get ma own place wit' ma girl 'cause she's on top of her shhh too and stackin' her shhh up.

When I get out I'm goin' to just do what I gotta do. Dat it and dat's all. A'ight then Beat dis proly ma last Beat 'cause I'm getting out befo'e dis week ova wit'. But I'm out. and everybody in da halls stay up

-Twon

From The Beat: We wish you good luck, and we know that if you're truly tired of coming to this place, you won't give the system any excuses to pull you back in. Twice you said, "I'm gonna do what I gotta do to stay out," but you didn't tell us what you think you "gotta do."

It's All-Wrong Here

Wassup with da Beat? It be ya boy CB, but I'm about to tell y'all straight up, juvenile ain't for none of us. It ain't good to be here. I gotta get outta here.

I always think about my mom and grandma, but I never think about them on the outs because I know I'm able to see them anytime. But in, I always think about them.

Ain't no girls. All the girls in unit 5. Wrong way. It ain't no good lookin' girls in here... You make jokes, then you get room time.

The food nasty and they play with yo' court dates too. It's like these people don't want you with yo' family. feel me. But I'ma be outta here in a min though with some new smoother way feel me.

-C- B

From The Beat: So if everything is bad about this place, how come you're here? And when you say you'll be smoother when you get back out there, does that mean you plan to keep doing what brought you here before, or that you plan to flip the script? One of those choices lead you right back.

So Close

Freedom's so close but yet so far while I look out the window in da cell... All I have to do is break da window and I'm free, but I know that ain't possible. My mind is playin' games on me. So all I can say is freedom so close but yet so far, as I look out da window.

-D-Boii

From The Beat: Is any part of your enslavement a product of your own thinking? To whatever extent it is, then to that extent you can free yourself — even while locked up!

An Act Of Courage

I had courage to come in here 'cause I didn't get mad. I just took my time like a man. I had da courage to keep it real with my mom 'bout what really happen to get me in here. I had the courage to tell my PO smoke too much grapes. I need help to stop.

-BM

From The Beat: What is the greatest act of courage is to acknowledge that you need help and to seek it. Continue being as strong as we can see that you are.

Why Do People Hate?

Man, I don't know why people be hating. Like when you wearing some type of clothes and then they be mugging someone like they sick. They only do it because they can't afford the clothes that you wear!

My message to them haters is stop your hating and get on with yourself!

-Dreamer

From The Beat: We find it interesting that most of the pieces in this issue about hate talk about others' hating, but not themselves. So what about it... Do you hate anyone? Why?

I've Been To The Zoo

My story isn't really about animals. Well, a little. It's about when me and my family went to the zoo. I spent time wit' my little cousin Zion aka Z-man. We watched the animals do their thing and I taught him about the king of the jungle, the lion. I told him why they were the king of the jungle. All and all, me and my lil' ninja had a blast. Rip Ma (Stormy)

-Cuba

From The Beat: We like this sweet memory of a day of ordinary fun. We wonder how Z-man remembers this day.

Think, Think, Think

Push it to the limit to succeed to the limit to redeem,
Got chu posted on da corner betta think where you gon be,

(Dead or in jail), locked up with no bail,

You can't never get a visit

Ya life going straight thru hell,

You betta stop, think, think, think, think,

Then take on ya actions, I been in this place for a 100 days flat,

All tha homies on the block askin' moms, "When is Jabba comin' back?",

Moms ah tell, "They tryin take 'im out the state,

Stay out and get a date, stay in and you get to wait."

-Jabba

From The Beat: Wherever you end up going, it's what you bring to the situation that will make it positive or negative. Keep thinking and keep teaching others to think.

Why Do People Hate?

Man I don't know why people hate. Some ninjas jus' hate 'cause they ain't you. Personally it's a couple ninjas dat hate on me and my 'hood. Really. I'm used to being hated on for real. My big bra's showed me what to do to a hater. Really I ain't even gon let all dat be exposed. It's got to the point where I ain't even trippin' off a ninja hatin' on me no mo' 'cause dat make me shine harder, I'm still gon be the YG I am.

-Top-Boy

From The Beat: So you've told us about people who hate on you, but what about in the other direction? Do you hate anyone?

What's In A Look

I remember when I was outside, I saw two guys looking at me. I ask them what did they claim and they told me. So I find out that they were trying to do something to me, so I fight them and that's why I am here.

-Gerillero

From The Beat: This is like the beginning of a piece that you could make much more interesting. Look around... don't your "enemies" look like you and talk like you? It's difficult to write about gangs in The Beat because we won't let you represent, only describe and explain.

People Hate

I think people hate because other people hate on them. And when people don't get they way, so that's when they think they gotta hate the person. But I say I don't hate nobody. I dislike some people, that's all.

-Young Chris

From The Beat: Maybe we're just using different words to describe the same thing. Why do you dislike some people?

We People Hate

What's poppin' wit' The Beat? Me, ANTO, same shhh, different toilet, different room number.

My interpretation of hate is, say for instance, you might be eating harder than somebody else, or you could have more females than someone else. But then you got natural-born haters that just hate on you 'cause the ninja! With all that said, I'm out.

-Anto

From The Beat: Like many of our writers, you told us why other people might be haters. But what about you? Do you hate anyone? Why?

Man, I don't know why people be hating. Like when you wearing some type of clothes and then they be mugging someone like they sick. They only do it because they can't afford the clothes that you wear!

What It Is

W'a's good yo. Dis ya boi Choppa. My American dream is to get money. To have a phat house on the beach next to all my ninjas. Also have a bunch of jetskys and a big vault with hella lil' breezies. But first, gotta make shore moms is looking right before anything. Oh yeah, I didn't forget about my ninjas on the outs. Y'all know what it is.

-Young Chop

From The Beat: Sounds like you'd like to live in a TV show...

Tired Of Saying Sorry

Yeah, what's up Beat? Dis Yung Na Na and I'm about to talk about saying sorry too much. I've said the word sorry too much. I've said sorry to my PO, the judge, and more. The word sorry is getting tiring. I'm getting tired of saying the word sorry, and I know some of you is getting tired of saying it too. But yeah, y'all know who I'm talking to. Love y'all. Be cool. I'm out Beat.

-Na-Na

From The Beat: We can't be sure if you're tired of the word sorry or the feeling of being sorry. Did you — do you — feel sorry for the things you said you were sorry for, or did you say them because that's what the PO, the judge and more wanted to hear?

Hate Won't Stop

Theres different ways people can hate.
 People can hate by hating on somebody's game
 like you can be spittin' game at some female
 she can be feelin' you
 you could walk away and some player hater could come
 up to her and just sell wolf tickets to her about you
 then he gets her number
 your just like damn
 left with nothin'.

But people hate because they got nothing better to do.
 People that grow up with good caring parents
 that have money, a car,
 basically that grow up living wealthy
 look at the people that grow up the opposite of them
 but when it comes down to something real serious
 those are the fools that wont survive out here in the
 streets
 without their parents, but then they could hate on
 others.

Hating is a big part in this world we live in and it will
 never stop.

-R

From The Beat: Isn't that a shame, hate won't stop. But you can play apart in making the world better and not let the hate get the best of you. Appreciate the thoughts.

Wyoming Football

Dear Beat,

I have to tell you about my good news. I wrote in The Beat about me going to Wyoming to play football, and the good news is that I am going in about two weeks! They have set up something for me and they will pay for all my football supplies and they will give me somewhere to sleep and food and water and all I have to do is play football and get good grades and they will pay for all the things I need. They said they that they might pay me an allowance every two weeks and that is enough to make do good for ever!

-JJ

From The Beat: It's nice to be recognized. It's funny how with a little bit of attention we can do good. We suspect you are a good ballplayer. Tell us more about Wyoming? Tell us more about your football skills? Is there family there? Is this high school ball or college?

Fake Legs

The time I built up courage was in Morgan Hill. There were these two twins that had fake legs. They swung their legs at my sister and my boy's sister. So I went to my house and got a bat and my boy got a crow bar we were looking for them and we found them. We started to chase them. We went through the park across the street by McDonalds. We went around the street in some apartments and we lost them.

-Bird Man

From The Beat: What happened? You mean to tell us they had fake legs and they were using them as weapons against your sister? Sounds like you were pretty darn mad at these twins to get a weapon. You were more than willing to lose your freedom over the fake legs? We wish you would have told us more to the story.

The Roaches In My Room

My favorite animal is my roach I got 2 of them in my room they walk around the walls I feed the cake at night their getting bigger about the size of my pic.

-D

From The Beat: A roach is your favorite animal? Why?

My Story

I'm going to tell you about the story of how I got locked up in Jail. It all started on a Wednesday, when I stole a camera and a watch.

Then on that Friday at my friend's house in the morning we went to my football game, and when I got home my mom said, "the cops are looking for you."

I said, "for what."

My mom said because someone said I broke into a house and stole a motorcycle and put three hundred miles on the bike.

Me and my mom went to the dude's house. I ask what was going on?

Well my friend broke into the house and logged on the computer and said I had his Bike you should see it. I was just playing and he said it was mine. I was set up and now I'm in here and he was in here but they let him go. I have court on Tuesday.

-It's all bad

From The Beat: Sounds like it's all bad. A bad choice of a friend. A bad choice on your part to be a thief. Bad all the way around. So, what to do? Any suggestions? What will make you stop violating others? What isn't yours, leave alone! You're setting yourself up!

This Hate

Hate is all around us

the reason I hate is because I feel I got the short end of the stick when it comes to life and other people have life so much easier

they were born with money
 a close knit family all that shhh!

But that's just me,

I want people to understand me and where I am coming from,

PO's don't know that's why I get so mad when they judge me,

"But That's Just Life" So I say screw it, 'cause they're gonna judge anyway.

-Rascal

From The Beat: It's wonderful that you are so honest with us readers. Since you recognize this, what to do? There is always going to be people who have it easier, or so it seems. How can you accept the cards you were dealt, and work on bettering yourself and control the anger and hate?

Haters Come Left And Right

Dear Beat,

There are always going to be haters. Sometimes people hate because they're jealous. Sometimes people hate because they don't like someone because of race or gender. Haters come left and right. Everyone hates even me.

Hate is an emotion that everyone expresses. There is nothing we can do about haters. I've been hated on many of times.

Hate can be taught through family and friends.

Being hated on dose not feel good. There is nothing we could do about haters. Haters are like opinions and assholes everyone has one and they stink, so just remember that you just respect others and they should respect you. If not just ignore their opinion. Peace out.

-Vincent

From The Beat: You did a fine job breaking down your thoughts on haters. We wish you would have given us an example of a time you were hated on or you hated on someone, other than that, we like your on topic response.

Using My Time Wisely...

When I get out I will be getting out on house arrest. I'm supposed to be going to school. But I'm moving out of San Jose. I'm going to be taking care of my nephews and my baby Raulito (my nephew). I'm also going to be working with my mom. That should be enough to keep me busy. At least when I'm going to be on house arrest, that way I don't cut off my ankle bracelet like I did last time. Well that's all for now. Ok Beat, alrato.

-Troubles

From The Beat: Hey Troubles. Sounds like plenty to keep you occupied. Keep your bracelet on and before long you'll be off probation. In the meantime, stay busy and stay clean.

Stranded At Six

Yeah, I was stranded once. I was six. I was taken away from my family, along with the rest of my siblings. We were sent to separate foster homes and I can tell you, I've never felt more lonely and stranded in my life.

It's been eleven years now, and I've finally met my parents. I am now in contact with all my siblings and they have grown so much, just like me.

Three of those eleven years I was raised and brought up by the system, in juvenile hall. And I feel somewhat as if the staff have raised me and taken care of me. They are like my family.

-Michael

From The Beat: Michael, we wish it weren't under these circumstances, but we are glad to hear from you again. Your stories always touched us. We hope you have a plan for the near future. You'll be 18 before you know it, and the world can be pretty scary if you don't have some good ideas for negotiating the turns and corners. Talk with us about it, please.

Improve Your Vocabulary

What makes us use the word hate is lack of vocabulary. People don't know what other words to use so they quick to use the word hate.

-Lil' Chris

From The Beat: Well, we have to agree with your two-sentence piece, but we wish you had given a few examples of other words you could use instead of hate... or were you asking for our suggestions?

An Animal Story

One time a couple of years ago, I went to Mexico for vacation and I was at my grandma's house. She lives in the ghetto part of Mexico.

One day, I decided to look around the town with my cousin. We was going down the street when we heard a dog screaming and barking hella loud. Me and my cousin came up to see what is was and started laughing, when we saw the two dogs having sex. I started cracking up. But the girl dog wasn't screaming for pleasure she was screaming 'cause she wanted the guy dog to get off her. Apparently, they was stuck with the dogs thing in her butt and they couldn't separate. The guy dog was moaning, too. They were walking around stuck together. I didn't want to separate them 'cause it was funny, but some other guy came and separated them. The girl dog was bleeding and the guy dog's thing didn't shrink or nothing it was just hanging, we scared the dogs away together, the girl dog bleeding and guys dog's thing hanging out.

-Luis

From The Beat: This is a quite a graphic story, but an interesting one because it shows the prevalence of stray dogs in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Sometimes it seems like, in America, everything is sterile and boring compared to the craziness we see on the streets of other countries.

I Don't Hate

People hate because they dislike a person or been hurt by something. People hate the gang your in or the color of your skin. It's just how life is and always going to be like that. There's always going to be like that. There's going to be hatred forever 'til the world ends. I don't hate anything.

-Smokey

From The Beat: We think your piece got truly interesting with your very last sentence. Is it true that you don't hate anything? How did you avoid what everyone else has experienced?

Poem For You

You used to be special to me,
and now your just a friend,
but I can't help think about the day it first began.
I thought we really had something, I thought I had it all.
But you chose to leave me lonely, even before I got to the Hall.
You broke my heart one too many times, you broke it once too much.
Now you'll never know they way I felt, from your slightest little touch.
I used to love you deeply, but my deepest wasn't enough,
you threw me out the window, you threw away my trust.
Despite the things you did to me, despite the way I felt,
despite the hurt and the pain you caused, I love you without a doubt.
I told you that if you had my baby, I swear I would've given it my all.
To see you happy and make you smile, that's the bestest gift of all.

-King Styles

From The Beat: This poem stands out because it shows love's triumph over rejection. It seems that many young people - and adults - hate the people that they are rejected by, but you still have the courage to express your feelings. That show's a great deal of sensitivity and depth.

Feeling Hate

I have felt hate
people hate on me a lil
because they can't make as much money as I do
or because I make more than they do
or sometimes it's just because people are bored and have nothing better to do than talk about someone.
Some people just want what I got and are mad because they can't have it.

-Lil Larry

From The Beat: Look who has the last laugh, they do, when you find yourself locked up 'cause of dirty money. Is this the way you want to live?

The Dog In The Cage

Once, there was this dog locked in a cage, watching time go by day by day. By his lonesome, he sits in his cage for commitin' a crime, now he's gotta pay. Starin' out his window, wonderin' what to do, waitin' for his food but it never comes, so he feels neglected. Neglected to the point that he feels regret by society living full of anxiety, just wanting to be out and run freely, no longer livin' on a leash of the system's hands, tryin to be a man but how can this be? When the animal is me.

-Jose

From The Beat: Even though this piece is short, it is really powerful. It reminds us of a deeper, more serious version of that Snoop Dogg video when all the guys turn into dogs.

Hate It Or Love It

What's up Beat? It's the one and only Chuccy coming strait from security max. I'm gonna drop a couple of lines for you Beaters! The subject I'm about to write on is why do people hate...

For me to say I hate this, I hate that, is so hard. Why? Because hate is such a strong word. It's more like saying you want to eliminate this or that from this world. That's how I feel of the word.

Honestly, I really don't hate nothing or anybody. I've had people who really hurt me inside, but I don't hate them. I just dislike them. That's me using the word hate. Let's switch it up a beat and talk about all this people hating on me. For example, when I get something new that just came out. Fools hate just 'cause they don't get one. I don't know, but hate isn't in my vocabulary. Unless I really want it out this world.

-Chuccy

From The Beat: Well, your definition of hate is a very clear one to understand. But we wonder if the feeling you describe by the word "dislike" is the same one as others describe as "hate"? The question is, have you eliminated the emotion of hate or just the word?

Courage

The act of courage that I witnessed was when a homie of mine turned himself in for the crime that he did, because the court had his homie locked up for his crime.

-Homie

From The Beat: Even though this piece is so short, we think it is very important. Your recognition of your friend's act as one of courage and his action really underscore what this topic was trying to get at. Powerful stuff.

Why Do People Hate

People hate because there isn't much you can do. Well, I don't hate nobody but I know some people grow up hating things or people cause sometime their family just mistreats them or nobody liked them while he or she was growing up, so all they know its hatred. Like I always say: Live life, don't go around hating people.

-Baby T

From The Beat: This is an insightful piece. It's true, people who hate often have a lot of stuff going on in their own life that makes them negative. Recognizing that will help you respond to haters with love and not more hate.

Books

Before being incarcerated, I rarely read books, but in the days I've been here, I've read several books. Of the three I liked "Where The Red Fern Grows" the best. It's a great story of a boy and his love for his two hound dogs, and the outdoors. It's great because it can take me away from here and into a world where I can run free.

On the other hand, I do get depressed when I stop reading and look around to find myself locked in a cell. Reading can be depressing, but at the same time it can be a necessary getaway.

-Dylan

From The Beat: The good thing, Dylan, is that no matter where you are, you will never run out of great books. We hope this is the start of a life long reading habit.

A Pitbull Story

The best animal story I know is about a pitbull that used to act human. The pitbull sometimes used to set up on steps like people. Also, one time the pit went up to this hot girl that bent over and started petting him. She had a shirt that had no stars on it and could be pulled down and that was what the pitbull did, and made her tits pop out.

-Dog Owner

From The Beat: It's funny how pets can sometimes start to act just like their owners. This dog sounds like one of the guys on the block. Is this dog still around?

Courage Is In Everyone

Courage happens everyday in our lives. Courage can be something little, like speaking your mind. Or it could be something big, like risking your life. Courage will always be in us. Being in here and not giving up is courage. Problems are happening at my house while I'm in here and when I get out, I will be better with my family and my homeboys. And also my life, I live it not write it and that's what courage is. I need my high school diploma and to put in more work.

-Spider

From The Beat: Sometimes courage is just realizing that you need to step up and face problems in your life, which you sound like you are ready to do.

RIP Pelon

All those times we shared
never thought it'll come to this,
all the good memories
I'll always treasure and miss

I wish I had not got locked up
I'd be chillin' with you that day,
but things happens for a reason
God works in mysterious ways

You were my boy,
I loved all our treasured times,
us getting hyphy and playin'.
You just made me smile.

But now you're gone
and I feel so lost.
Why now? Why here?
Everything seems so wrong.

I know you're in a better place.
I just can't believe it had to be you,
God, I ask you forgive his sins,
a precious angel I had to lose.

I love you boy.
I just hope you know,
so I write in pain
in this sorrowful poem.

I miss you Jose,
you'll always be a part of me,
I love you my ninja
Rest In Paradise, baby.

To the Beat thank you
for letting me speak my mind.
You helped me through a lot,
helped me discover all that's been lost in time.

-Lady Joker

From The Beat: Thanks for recognizing the importance of "speaking your mind" in the healing and rehabilitation process. Writing about those who have passed away from allow them to live on. Keep writing.

Party Boy

I miss going to parties, getting loaded and waking up next to a beautiful stranger. It's crazy sometimes when stuff like that happens. At first, it's a little freaky because you never know if the person you woke up next to has something contagious that can affect you later on in life. After a while, if it keeps happening you'll learn to just say: "ef it, whatever happened, happened and there ain't jack shhh I can do to change it."

Even though I can't go out and party the way I used to because I'm on probation, don't mean that I ain't going back to that lifestyle because I miss meeting new people and experiencing new things with different females. I don't care how old they are, they just can't be past thirty-nine. Ha Ha! But really though, I do miss being a party animal and there ain't a doubt in my mind that I'm gonna party again when I get off probation.

Well, that's all for today Beat, till pencil meets paper.

-Triste

From The Beat: While your lifestyle does sound fun, it also sounds super risky, which you recognize. You make a joke out of STDs, but the health risk could end your enjoyment of life much longer than probation. But if you practice safe sex, you could protect yourself from various contagions out there, and if you slow down on the partying, well you'll make way better choices.

"I Might Get Out"

Hey Beat, what's up. This is your girl Bayby-G dropping a couple of lines for ya'll to read. Well anyway Beat, about to cut this short, so - just to break it down to you and let you know I might get out this Monday, if everything goes well. But anyway, much love to all locked up. Keep your head up high.

-Baybe-G

From The Beat: Hey, you "cut this short" before you even got started. We're only printing your note to let you know, and all Beat writers know, that we're looking for substance. Our readers really want to know what's happening with you. Saying hello and goodbye in a line or two doesn't give us much to wrap our ears and eyes around. We're glad that you'll probably get out. But we want to know what makes you tick, how you feel, what you're going to do to get it all together. OK....

A Tribute To My Helpful Counselors

Aye, what up Beat? It's yo' boy Thirst from the max. Well Beat, my week has been a little better from last. I got to tell you, I'm growing my hair back out, so now I'm getting my 'fro back... Oh, my bad to get off subject.

Well, to get this started, there are many counselors from my unit and from others. They are truly helpful and I just want to thank them for talking to me or helping me with what to say to certain people. This is to y'all, Ramm, Garcia, Bowes, Britton, Cornado, Lee... Thank you all for helping me with my situations and for just talking to me.

My whole time being here I've always had a counselor to talk to. All these people are good people. Even if someone has a little problem or a big problem, these counselors have help a few. But it was worth the talk.

Also a special thanks to Ms. Carla Ramm coming from her new unit to come talk to me, and still listen and counsel me. That is forever gonna be in my heart. Much love to you.

Well Beat, that's my tribute. Thank you for listening 'till next time Beat. Late.

-Thirst

From The Beat: We're glad The Beat gives you a chance to express your gratitude to these helpful counselors. It's nice to say "thank you," and we know they'll appreciate reading this.

Why Do People Hate?

People tend to hate because they don't love.

-Alvarez

From The Beat: We're not sure we agree. Wish next time you would give us more insight besides this one sentence.

You're My Only One

You're the one that gave me strength,
when I didn't have any.

You're the one that believe in me,
when I didn't believe in myself.

You're the one that was there for me,
when no one else was.

You're the one who loved me,
when no one else would.

You're the one who made my cold heart melt,
when you caressed it with your love and care.

Now, I'm the one you can depend on
when no one else is there.

Because you loved me and said I was the only one
my love for you will burn forever like the hot-ass sun.
But real talk, you are the moon to my stars, the peanut
butter to my jelly,

Whitney Houston to my Bobby Brown.

We were meant to be together,
and our love will go on forever and ever.

You are my only one!!!!

From the one who will love, protect and respect you.

-Oso

From The Beat: It is really refreshing to read love poems that uplift relationships and talk about the joy in them. It seems like many people dwell on the negative and degrade women.

My Mom, My Girl And My Dog

That person that I won't forget is my mom 'cause she is always been there for me on bad times. That's a person I won't forget. Another person that I won't never forget is my girlfriend 'cause she's been for me all that times.

My girl got mad at me, went to slap me 'cause I was talking to some other girl. But she has a attitude, bad attitude. But I love her.

That funny thing about animals that they listen after you tell them something. But for me, animals are like a normal humans to me. I have a dog and I treat very good. When I tell him to do something, he does.

-Fernando

From The Beat: We like people who love their dogs and don't train them to be mean. If your dog could talk, he'd be asking you to stay home with him, and not give up your freedom again! If he could ask you that, would you be able to do it?

Don't Hate

Ha, ha, Hate is a funny word because vatos that hate always end up getting beat up. So to all you hating vatos, quit hating on this Latino just 'cause your girl is wanting me. Just understand that you foo's need to watch your mouth and quit hating "Gs." Step your game up an' try to be like me.

Ha, ha. Why hate? I don't want her, she wants me! And think about this: A guy only as far as the girl lets him," because if you pulled my woman, I would congratulate you for being a better man than me.

-Lil' Juero

From The Beat: So, if we understand you, the measure of a "better man" is the one who was able to get his friend's girlfriends to cheat on them with him? If that the better man, we wonder what the worse man is like.

Thinking About Hate

I don't think just because our relatives hate somebody that we have to hate them. That's stupid because they didn't even do anything to you.

I think we do learn hate from our families, but that is a negative thing. Just growing up around that stuff everyday it slowly gets in your mind. It corrupts families and makes problems for everyone.

I have hated people before, but I try to get over it because it's really not that serious. The advice I give to other people is to be patient and stay calm, because it's not worth being locked up.

-Sg

From The Beat: You have it right, hating another person is not worth losing your freedom over. Best advice we can give you is to walk away, who cares that they can call you names, 'cause in the end, you're free and living at home.

Poof!

What's upper Beaters? It's that Chingon Travieso. I'm going to write on the topic about an animal story.

I never had a pet, but I wish if I ever get one, I'll get a fish like "Finding Nemo."

Now that's a firme-ass fish. Or I'll want to have all the Ninja Turtles. Now that will be some shhh. I'll have fun with those fools, I'll get drunk with them and I'll take them with me to the "Strip." All five of us would pull all you fake-ass vatos' ladies. Ha, ha. And that will suck. Well I'm gone "poof"

-Travieso

From The Beat: We love this fantasy of you joining up with the Ninja Turtles. We also loved Nemo, so go for it!

Why Fools Hate

What's up with you Beat? Yeah, it's yo' uso, Siaki, about to drop some lines about fools hatin'.

Well, I just don't know why fools stay hatin'. But the one reason why I think fools stay hatin' is 'cause they were just haters or dey just always kick it with ninjas dat jus' hate all day 'cause dey don't got what otha ninjas got.

But hey, what we say, there will always be a person wit' dat hatin' disease, no matter where you go. And I don't know why ninjas dat don't like getting hated on start hating on otha ninjas.

All right then Beat, I'll slap some line on a paper fo' y'all next week. Sa love ...

-Giant Samoa

From The Beat: You wrote about others hating, but does that mean you don't hate? Or that you'd rather point the finger out than in?

My Best Friend

Well, I'm hella mad because my best friend Destiny had an abortion today. She was 18 weeks and seven days, but she didn't want it. Her man is locked up in here. His name is Elmo and she hella been going through it and it's just all bad. Damn, I wish I could be out with her.

I'm happy, 'cause my man left to the Ranch and he wrote me letters but I can't get them yet. That's all for now, till next time.

-Stephanie

From The Beat: Wow, sounds like your friend is going through a lot. Maybe you can write her a letter and give her a call to lend your support. But maybe you should think about how you can get out and stay out of the Hall, so you can be there for her all the time.

People Hate

People hate

because they either don't have what you have
or they just don't like you

or sometimes they hate to make themselves feel better.

-Alex

From The Beat: Take it further next time. Give an example how this applies in your life!

Why Do People Hate?

I think there's haters in this world because they have nothing else to do. They like getting in to people business. They like seeing people fighting over something stupid or sometimes they're jealous. But we should not trip off of them. Sometimes it bothers us hella bad because they lie. They're just haters. We shouldn't trip 'cause it ain't no big thang if we know the truth. So just brush off our shoulders and go on with our lives.

I'm going through a big problem right now. My man is locked up. He's been locked up for five month and hella people are hella hating. They are telling him hella stuff, saying I've been cheating on him but to be real all I've been doing is drugs. I haven't cheated on him, but it's all right - let them hate. 'Cause I'm just going to keep on doing what I'm doing. So forget all those haters.

-Selena

From The Beat: When people lie about us to people we love, that seems to be the worst kind of hating ever. But if your man trusts you, he won't believe the hype.

An Act Of Courage

I stood up for something that took a lot of courage. It was a hot day, and the ice cream man was comin'. I was sittin' down and I stood up. I thought it was right for me to get up and get a snow cone. Ha ha, that was courage. It was so damn hot it took a lot of energy to get up!

-Feeling Within

From The Beat: Yeah, you had to use about the same amount of energy to give us a whole six sentences! But we'll give you this - it took courage to not care that your silliness is on the same page with others your age who take The Beat more seriously.

Missin' My Baby

He stands about two feet tall,
but he makes my world go round.

The greatest: his smile, laugh
and his shining gray eyes.

He can barely talk but his:
"I love you, mommy!" is enough.

Yes, it's my son.

He's a year and nine months
and he's my world.

I changed everything to make sure he
has a good life.

I love my baby.

To wake up everyday
without him is hard.

But I know the gods are looking over him.

I love my son Junior. So
to everyone in here: keep your head up.

What don't kill you
makes you stronger.

'Til next time.

-Proud Mommy

From The Beat: This is a beautiful ode to your baby. It seems like you really love your son and want to be taking care of him. What is your goal to get out of the Hall and back to him?

Haters

This is Ronnie from Gilroy. Well today I'm gonna write about all these haters in the world. There's so much damn haters running around, acting hard, thinking they're all bad and shhhh. Everyone hates 'cause they ain't hard and shhhh. There's people that hate on me 'cause I'm a G and they wish they were like me, so fresh and so clean-clean. But all those haters aren't worth my time, they're just haters who just wanna fit in but ain't all that 'cause they ain't down.

So all the haters need to get their act together. Well, I'm out for now. Late to all. Stay up, much love and respect.

-Ronnie

From The Beat: Hmmm, it seems like you say that all the haters out there are just jealous of you. But have you ever hated on someone because you are jealous of them?

Why Do People Hate?

I think there in a lot of haters out there because they aren't confident with themselves. They hate on you because of jealousy or to try to make you feel bad, and in return (normally) people will hate back. And I'm not going to lie, I hate sometimes too but then I catch myself thinking: What's the point? It won't change anything and I won't gain anything. So, why keep on doing it?

So now, I know I'm older and more mature for that and I laugh back on all the haters. Meanwhile I smile though my life, they are hating and mad wanting to live someone else's life.

-Rosita

From The Beat: It's a good idea to not respond to haters because oftentimes they are looking for attention. Your maturity is certainly showing in this piece.

People Hating

What's up Beat it's David from Sunnyvale just holding it down for The Beat.

You want to know why do people hate people hate, because they want to be just like you, they want to fit in and copy you never want to act like themselves. Why they hate on me because I'm from a certain hood and I'm shining on all these punks? Why people want what you got, and they can't get their own, so they hate out.

-D

From The Beat: Who are these people you speak about? Why in the world would they want what you have? Seriously! Sounds like you write from experience?

Haters

Those who live their lives with hate, I gotta say I feel sorry for them.

Hate sucks the fun out of everything they try to do. They are always frowning about every little thing it's sad. But haters will be haters and playas will be playas – that's just how the game goes.

It's only the way you want to live your life.

I live my life to the fullest and I don't hate because I ain't a hater.

That's what makes my life bright, fun, with a smile on my face 'cause I'm sick like that. Those are some of my ways!

-Judy

From The Beat: It's true – haterism and negativity just make life less fun. New studies show that having a positive outlook will affect how long you live and the quality of your life. It seems like you are heading down the right track.

We All Got Hate

People hate 'cause it comes naturally. There ain't no such thang as "I ain't no hater, 'cause people hate every day. People who say they ain't no hater, they talkin' out they ass.

Example, dude see a beautiful lady and wanna holla at her and tell his homie, "Damn, Homie, I hella wanna get at her." Then dude say, "You think yo' homie gon go ahead and get her number and make her his?" And dude say that that ninja hella hatin' 'cause he (shock-blockin'). But dude the one really hatin' when dude could've grew some balls and step up his game.

Anyways, to make the whole story short, we all have a little hate in us.

Well that's it my nestol. I'm 'bout to play Bingo tonight fa sho, gone. Sa love Stay (malosi)

-Tiny Samoa

From The Beat: Could you come up with any other examples of hate besides your scenario?

I Miss My Familia

Hey Beat, what up? Well yeah, this your girl: Baybe-G dropping in a couple of lines for y'all to read. Well yeah, Beat just to let you know I hella miss my familia and can't wait to be with them. Beat, I'm hella willing to change my life around to spend more quality time with them and not do drugs to push them away like before.

Well Beat, I had court on the 10th and the judge said that I'll be able to get an O-T for my Mezzys B-day but come to find out since my POs out for a week, his supervisor said I can't go 'cause I'm too high of a risk - might run.

So Beat, gots to take it down. So much love and respect.

-Baybe-G

From The Beat: Being locked up seems to have made some positive impact. Sometimes it's when we are away from our loved ones that we realize our greatest dedication towards them.

Why Do People Hate?

To me, there's a few reasons a person might hate.

Jealousy.

Coincidences.

For example, on the jealousy part – being up in here, people are always hating on one another. They are always saying shhhh like: "Oh, that "b" is ugly. I am so much better than her, and all that other stupid shhhh."

I know in general that girls talk shhhh about each other, but up in here you have to live with it. I hate this shhhh. I be stressing out up in here.

- Big Meg

From the Beat: It seems like a lot of people say that girls hate on each other more than is called for. But as a young woman, how do you think you can change this instead of just adding to the problem?

The White Tiger

My favorite story was when I went to Chicago 'cause I went to a big zoo where there was all kinds of animals. And what really surprised me was this white tiger that had blue eyes and looked hella cool, it was like the most popular animal in the zoo. A lot of people would go to the zoo just to see that white tiger 'cause it was very big and very cool.

-Lorenzo

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing with us this memory of visiting the white tiger.

The Things I Wanna Do When I Get Out Of Here

- 1: Get a tattoo – first one – Grumpy, then – The Fresa, then – my hevas name, and some other stuff I can't tell you about.
- 2: I'm getting my tongue pierced, and probably my nose.
- 3: I'm gonna become clean and start a whole new life, a good one.
- 4: I wanna try to become a singer.
- 5: And I wanna feel good again and be the old good me.

-Grumpy

From The Beat: We like 3, 4, and 5. No comment on 1 and 2.

An Animal Story

One time we had a pet Chihuahua. A rabbit got into the yard and my dog started to chase it, round and round. He was getting close to catching up with the rabbit. They were both running right at the sliding glass door. The rabbit cut left and my dog hit the door and got knocked out. Luckily, he recovered.

-Diego

From The Beat: Good story Diego. We're glad your dog survived, and, we're glad the rabbit got away. It must have been quite sight.



Using My Time

While I'm here I like to use my time to educate myself, like reading books when I'm in my room. I think it's a really good thing to do when you're locked up.

I also like to use my recreation time to watch TV, or to listen to the radio. And I like playing cards and dominoes with the homies or the staff. But what I like to use my time for mostly is to catch up on my credits, because I'm really low on them.

I've been in here since May. By the time I get out, on my 18th birthday, I should be on the level with all my credits.

-Buddha

From The Beat: We'd like to hear about the books you've been reading. We're glad you're keeping busy.

Things are going good in my life. I just made a little mistake, but I guess that's normal. I'm not perfect.

This Week

This week is probably the happiest week I've had in my life. My son was born on the 5th of September. Best believe I'm hella happy. At the same time, I'm mad, because I couldn't be there for his birth. But I can't blame anyone but myself because I put myself in this position. So I have to get myself out of it. I have half a year more to do in juvy, but it's all firme. I just have to keep my head up and stay solid. I have to always strive and never give up, at anything.

-Jordan

From The Beat: We congratulate you, Daddy Jordan. We ask you to imagine the kind of life you'd like your son to have. You have your work cut out for you, but it will be good work. Again, we offer our congratulations to you, your son, and your son's mother.

Caught

Freedom stolen by political thieves
Trying to weather the storm
Seems like a shipwreck
Lost in an ocean of despair
Where can I find myself
No opportunity for a kid stuck in a rut
Look at me

-Youngsta

From The Beat: We don't know why you don't claim ownership to this poem. It's a pretty good one. We'll be on the lookout for more.

Back Again

Well damn, back once again. But it's all good. I'm leaving soon, anyways. I went to court this morning and they told me that I have 90 days to get and hold a job.

And then they will let me off probation. So, it's all good. Things are going good in my life. I just made a little mistake, but I guess that's normal. I'm not perfect. My vato and I are doing well. When I get out we're getting an apartment, and plus, we have a little one on the way. So ya pues!

-Kaisha

From The Beat: Wow, things better be good. That's a huge responsibility you and your guy are taking on. To give your child a good life, each of you must lead a good life. No time anymore for the kinds of mistakes that got you back in here. We wish you and your new family well.

The Best Book

The best book I've read is East Side Dreams. It is about a young guy who gets in trouble and goes to CYA for murder. It kind of relates to me, because I'm in here charged with attempted murder, and I'm on my way to CYA. I've been in here for eight months. I read the book on the recommendation of a homeboy. He said it was a good book, and he was right.

-Juan

From The Beat: Juan, ask us and we will suggest additional books you might like. Have you been bitten by 'the reading bug' yet? It leaves an itch you can only relieve by reading, and reading, and reading. It's a very good itch.

I've Been Hated On Most Of My Life

I have been hated on most of my life. Haters judge when they see you or meet you. Haters can hate you for some things you can't even control. You can't control your skin color or what you look like—those are the things that are already planned for you before you're born.

Honestly, I'm not a hater, I'm a lover. I always think there is some good in people. That why most people hate on me, 'cause I don't judge someone 'cause of the race, the color they rep, the things they wear, or the things they do. Haters are someone who judges or are just mad.

-Lil' Mama

From The Beat: How do you deal with someone who is hating on you? How does that negative emotion affect you? Do you figure out what's causing the hate? Talk to the person/people about it? Hate on them back? Ignore it and hope they get over it on their own?

Haters

Once I was in a homie's house when these kids passed by and they started to mug us and they left. Then they came back and then they got out of the car and they asked us what we bang? And then my homie told him what we bang and he pulled a knife and then my homeboy told him to fight him one on one, and he just turned around and he walked away. That's my story about the haters.

-Chucky

From The Beat: What happened to the other haters, after the one walked away? Regardless, you're lucky that was the end of it. What a relief, right? Some really ugly, dangerous mess could have gone down, with you in it. What did you learn from all this?

It Always Me

It always me—why? I always get in trouble for every little thing I do—Jade did this, Jade did that, Jade, Jade. Why always Jade? Jade? Why not everybody else? It always me. I feel like I get picked on by everybody.

-Jade

From The Beat: Sometimes it can seem like you're the only one who is getting blamed for everything, whether it should really be on you or not, and that can really hurt. How are you dealing with it?

Snack Time

I was walking down the street with my friend, when all of a sudden a pit bull from the neighbor's yard came and attacked my friend's cat. I saw it break the cat's neck and tear off its skin. I hit the pit bull and it let go of the cat. The cat eventually died, because it was unsaveable.

-Dr. Zelus

From The Beat: At least you tried to save the cat's life. It takes courage to wade into a pit bull when it has anything in its jaws. Did the dog turn on you? Would you get into it again, if you saw a pit with a cat again?

Hate

Why do people hate on each other? Is it because someone has something you don't have? People hate because they are jealous of things that they don't have. Many other people hate on decisions they can't make on their own yet, that their parents still make decisions for their kid, and maybe the kid thinks he is old enough to make decisions. I hate that my mom still thinks that I'm not old enough or smart enough to make my own decisions, but maybe parents do make a point at some times.

-Moises

From The Beat: Have you ever found yourself hating on anyone? What about when your own parents supersede your decisions, because they may still have the final authority? How do you deal with those feelings of hate, that we all have sometimes? Why can feelings of jealousy turn hate? What advice do you have for other youngsters when they hate?

How Did My Life Come To This?

As I sit, I sit and reminisce
I wonder how my life ever came to this
Why, when and why again?
Damn, I'm in juvenile hall
Forget this place
Sit back in my room
When the night is late
This can't be
I know it's not my fate
Days on end
Too much time I spend
Inside down in the hall again
I try to walk
I'm stopped by a wall
Man, I hate the halls
I've been locked up, released, locked up, released
Twelve times
I need to change this life of crime
I need probation off my back
With them, I get released
And come back
It's strictly for survival this time
Come up to the age
Get off, and spend the rest of my time
Staying up, happy and perfectly fine
I love girls—they are the shhh
I live for them

-J

From The Beat: What are you doing out there on the outs, that is sabotaging your freedom, your life, your future over and over? Is something else in your life really bothering you, that causes you to feel better/safer incarcerated? How do you hope your life will be, once you get it going again, the way you want it on the outs?

The Raccoon Vs. Me

One time, when I was in rehab, I snuck out the back window to the back alley to smoke and go to the girls' cabin. There was a giant raccoon, so I chucked a full water bottle at it and knocked it out. Shhh, it was hilarious.

-Straight Raccoon Hater

From The Beat: It is funny, but what happened to the raccoon? Did he come to? Was he all right? Guess you never made it to the girls' cabin?

My Mind Still On The Outside

When I wake up every morning, I have a feeling that I'm not here any more and that I'm at home. When I open my eyes, though the reality comes through, I'm still in here, while my mind was playing tricks on me, thinking I was at my place. I thought I was at my place, 'cause I sleep on the ground, anyways, so the hard ground and the hard mattress pretty much felt the same.

I'm always thinking. I wonder what my girlfriend and other friends are doing. When I wake up, I wonder, is my girlfriend awake? When I eat, I wonder, is my girlfriend eating? But I'll never know, 'cause I can't even call her. I'm pretty sure if I try to call her and if she doesn't answer, her mom or brother won't accept my call. Alls I got is my homeboys in the halls.

My girl is waiting for me, so when I get out, I'm gonna take her out to eat (really, I'm gonna be eating, 'cause I'm gonna be hungry as hell.) I can't wait to get out. I'm gonna get to do everything and it's gonna be so cool.

-Sneaky

From The Beat: It must be sad, lonely and even scary for each of you inside, every morning, to wake up from dreaming and realize you still aren't home. You describe that sensation very well. Has your time in juvy taught you that you never want to go back? We hope so!



Why Hate?

Yeah I've been hated on, not for my looks, my talk, my walk, but for my actions decisions, and speaking my thoughts. I really don't care, I did at first, and I was always worried and scared around a hatter. Nowdays I hate back to them ten times worse and they cry to their mamma like the little brats they are and were. They took my kindness for weakness back in the day. HAHA, having them in their houses by night, wow, I like it this way.

I make sure I'm strapped, locked and loaded before I leave my pad. I'm pretty dangerous with a hater around with a fifth and a gun in my hand.

Hate is a heavy word in this world today. No mater what when a hatter is around you know I got something to say. I hate on certain people or on a person because they either hated on me or my family. I also hate the law and the system, they got me locked up and their files all twisted.

So, yeah the haters in general they aren't worth it, but I got this always and forever.

- Tweety

From The Beat: Yes, hate is a very strong word, and not a way to live life. Also keep in mind being "strapped, locked and loaded" is also not a way to live life. If you do not change your way of thinking you'll only find way back in lock up or buried. For the sake of the ones who love you change your ways. You may hate the law and the system, but know it's not them that got you were you are, you put your self there by your own actions.

Hate This Hate

The reason people hate is 'cause of colors.

Colors can put you in a grave;
colors are a thing that some people take to the heart
when a color is worn by a person who is not part of a
gang or click. They get the treatment of a gangsta,
so when you walk through my hood keep yo' colors
right
'cause if you don't then there's no tellin' what would
happen.

-Otis

From The Beat: It's a shame that the simple color of a person's clothes will bring such hate on another person whether or not they are in a gang.

This Hate

When people hate they do things they regret

They hate on the color

They hate on the click

When it comes down to real hate they are real quick

We got cars and we got cloths

They hate ever more 'cause we got all there...

Hate for us is a part of life

Hate is what happens when we take a life

Why do people hate a I can't name all the reason's why

So I'm leaving it at that with out a reason why

- Sarah

From The Beat: In the end of your piece you say "I'm leaving it at that with out a reason why" yet, you gave three perfect examples as to why people hate. A person's color, their click, and the clothes they wear, that alone is how and why people use that dreadful expression, "Hate".

Why?

Why do people hate?

Even though they see the drama that they create

Why are people rude? When they see the society will not
improve

Why do people fight? They argue their point when they
know they're not right

Why do people kill? Instead of making money they
choose to steal

Why do people hate? I guess we'll never know

All we can do is try to respect everywhere we go.

-Amber

From The Beat: Well said Amber that is the big question. Who do people hate? This can only be answered by the person(s) doing the hating, and I'm sure if you ask this question every day you'll get a different answer each time you ask the person(s). You have made a step in the right direction with your last sentence. "All we can do is try to respect every where we go."

Don't Hate The Criminal

People hate other people 'cause all they see is the criminal side of you and they don't see the good side.

Like for instance my social worker and my JPO all they see is my bad side. They don't see how I tried to do good, all they see is that I messed up. I try to tell them that it's hard, but all they want is for me to be in lock down. They don't see the anger the pain I'm going through right now, but my actions will have to speak louder then words.

- Iyesha

From The Beat: The Beat finds it hard to believe that all your social worker and JPO want is for you to be in "lock down". As you said your actions will speak louder then any words. If you're always in trouble those around you will only see that, but if you are always doing good that is what you'll be judged on. Prove them wrong and make the right choices to keep you out of lock up.



Despidir

What's up The Beat Within? Pues yo voy hablar de despidir. Pue yo me tuve que despidir dos de mis amigos por que ellos tuvieron un accidente. Me senti triste por que eran mis mejoren amigos y eran de mi barrio. Y me senti mal por que dejaron a sus familiares.

From The Beat: Eso si es algo triste. A perder a dos amigos es algo bien deficiil. La vida es una cosa bien preciosa. Solo tienes una vida, tienes que escojer como la quieres vivir.

Saying Goodbye

Well I'ma talk about saying goodbye. I had to say goodbye to two of my friends that were involved in a car accident. I was really sad because they were my best friends and we were from the same hood. I also felt bad because they left the families real sad.

-P, San Jose

From The Beat: We are sorry to hear about your friends. That is sad. It's hard to lose a friend let alone two! Life is something very precious. You only have one life, it's up to you to decide how you want to live it!

Yo Quisiera....

Yo quisiera yegar hacer una buena persona
No quisiera yegar hacer un pandillero
Quisiera yegar hacer un estudiante y
Aprender hablar el ingles perfecto
Yo quisiera cambiar y no ser el mismo de antes
No quisiera ni acordarme donde andube bagando
Hasta que bine a para en la carcel
Quisiera cambiar mi vida y ser una diferente persona.

From The Beat: Usted puedes hacer lo que quieres hacer. Si quieres hacer un estudiante pues dale gana! Si no quieres hacer un pandillero pues no lo haga! Hay sola una persona que tiene control de tu vida, y esa persona es tu!

I Would like....

I would like to be a good person
I would not like to be a gang member
I would like to become a student
And learn how to speak perfect English
I would like to change and not be how I was before
I would not even like to know where I was when I was
thuggin'
Till it made me land here in jail
I would like to change my life and be a different person.

-William, San Francisco

From The Beat: You can do whatever you want to do. If you want to be a student, what's stopping you? If you don't want to be a gang banger, then don't! There is only one person in control of your life, and that is you!

Para Mi Tio

Nunca pude despedirme de ti
You left us all behind so quick
De un día al otro u were gone
So much pain your loss did inflict
Tio Tavo you are in my thoughts
Your life was taken in a manera muy triste
Those heartless men who took your life
Me enseñaron que la vida no es chiste
You were mi padrino de bautiso
And I wuz your negrita ojona
Por las acciones de unos envidiosos
Vi que la vida es muy cabrona
Tio you did not deserve your fate
Now my cousins live without a dad
Mi madre vive sin su primo
You are the good the world once had.

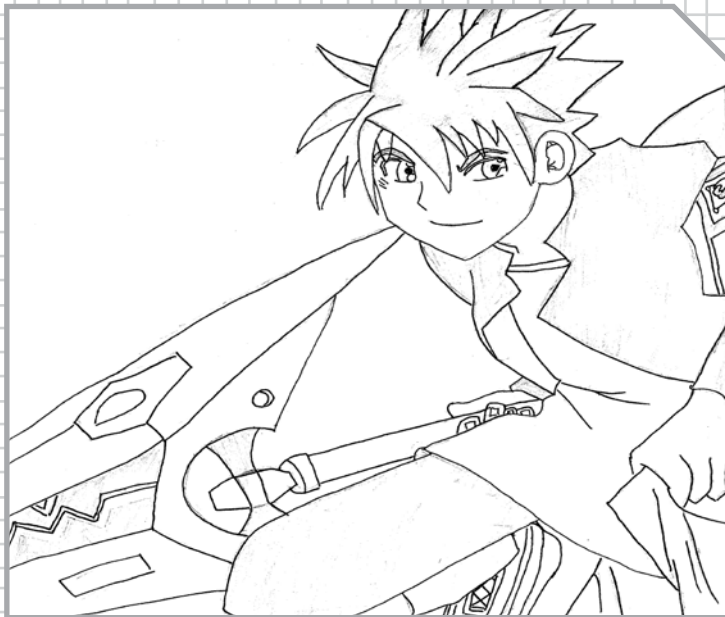
From The Beat: A perder a alguien que uno quiere es deficiil. También pasando tu vida en esos cuartos chiquitos no es nada bueno. Ya que te vas a poner mas Viejo la carcel son mas grandes y los cuartos son mas chiquitos. No quieres estar con tu familia imbez de estar aqui?

For My Uncle

I never got the chance to say goodbye to you
You left us all behind so quick
From one day to the next you were gone
So much pain your loss did inflict
Uncle Tavo you are in my thoughts
Your life was taken in a sad way
Those heartless men who took your life
It showed that life ain't no joke
You were my godfather at my Baptism
I was your big black-eyed niece
Because of the actions of some haters
I seen that life is brutal
Uncle you did not deserve your fate
Now my cousins live without a dad
My mom has to live without her cousin
You are the good the world once had.

-Titi, San Mateo

From The Beat: Losing somebody you love is very hard. Living life behind these doors in those small little rooms is not the way. As you grow older the facilities get bigger and the rooms get smaller. Decide what you want to do. You have family. Would you rather be spending time with your family than being in these facilities?



Love Me or Break Me

Is who you see really who you see?
 It's me, so love it or hate it, I'm tired of this shhhh.
 I wanna' walk and know I have nothing to prove.
 You like me, I like you.
 You have no love for me, I have no love for you.
 Ain't satisfied, not my problem.
 Love me or break me,
 Is who you see
 really what you see?
 It's me.
 So love it or hate on it,
 I'm tired of this shhh.
 I wanna' walk
 and know I have nothing to prove.
 You like me,
 I like you.
 You have no love?
 I have no love for you.
 Ain't satisfied?
 Not my problem.

Sometimes I can't take it.
 I think and think about it.
 I'm stuck in a cell
 surrounded by four walls
 I call hell.
 I feel I'm trapped in a cage,
 full of rage.

Knowing all my haters are happy
 and I'm here, feeling crappy.
 Blood tearing, dripping on the floor.
 Fearing that God, himself, isn't on my side.
 As I close my eyes,
 He whispers
 "Don't worry, child.
 There's nothin' to fear."
 I open my eyes,
 I see no one but my cell mate,
 fast asleep.
 I look down to my feet
 And then to my door
 I touch the door
 and it opens.
 I see my family,
 I walk towards them.
 Suddenly, when I'm about to hug my mom
 I wake up and that's the end.
 I hate the hall,
 it ruined my life.
 I'm just left here to fall.
 Haters, forget you

-Anna

From The Beat: Your poem is honest, full of passion and beautifully written. Thank you for sharing (conveying) your thoughts and fears with us. But we can't agree that the hall has ruined your life. For one thing, you were already involved in things that made your life less than it could be — which is what led you to the hall. But more important, your life is still to be written by you, so while this experience may have ruined a period of your life, today is just a snapshot to look back on from a different and, with your efforts, better perspective in the future.

I Played Myself

Without thought, without question, I compromised my
 very being
 So willing without consciously allowing my intellectual
 side to get the best of me
 I played myself
 When temptation and peer pressure stood so tall
 Boasted and proud the inner weakened spirit drifted
 away like summer clouds
 It was at that moment that temptation and peer pressure
 settled inside me
 I played myself
 Maybe its true I'm a weakling providing small cracks and
 spaces
 To overcome my very being
 The stronger I get the weaker I get for small things I
 need to overlook
 Like honesty, loyalty and trust.
 I bend those characteristics to me when I'm in a crouch
 I may even compromise for a little lust
 I played myself
 This is a battle that many have a tendency to face
 Ripping apart the insides of their spirit man
 Who is fighting so diligently to stand
 What happens when the lust lies
 And grimy behaviors consume the best of us
 Please someone help me to no longer play myself.

-Mackin'

From the Beat: Self-awareness is the beginning of wisdom... but only the beginning. Your critical self-examination has led you to see that you are the master of your own fate, so you must also know that, in the end, only you can help yourself to stop playing yourself. Without that knowledge, no change is possible, but beyond the knowledge you also need inner strength (the courage to say no to peers, for example) and self-discipline. You have it within yourself to manifest these qualities, but only time will tell if you do.

Doing Time In Hell

I'm chilling at my room, writing this and what I want to say is that all the days look the same in here, because you do the same stuff always, and it's like if you are living the same day for the rest of your stay here.

The only things and people that are stopping me from getting out of here are these walls and fences and cops and my probation officer. I'm doing time—just nine months — that's it. Well, I just got three more to go and I'm out, back to my family and friends.

There are good times in here and bad times, and there are times that you don't know what to do. I hate this place, because it's just wasting my time and they don't really teach you a lesson. You just learn how to play the system better and better, because you learn from your mistakes.

Doing time in here, it doesn't just affect you only, it affects your loved ones, too. I think that they should stop making places like this and start making more parks and stuff like that, because we sometimes don't have nothing to do and we go to the streets and get into trouble by hanging out with the wrong people or something like that.

Doing time in the hall does not change all people. Probably only two out of 500 people that come to this place change because they didn't like this place and some other people change because they have to. And you can't change if you don't want to change.

-Chucky

From The Beat: What exactly does "wanting to change" mean? Is it just staying out of trouble, not breaking the law? Or is it rethinking your priorities—your family, your freedom, and your future—outside of the system? Even if you're completely right about the hall not being an effective tool to make people change, what will make you change so that you don't have to experience this waste of your time? Do you believe you've learned lessons that will make you slicker, or lessons that will make you rethink the choices you've been making?

A Milli-Second Of Thought

The things that make my mind drift away from this place called a correctional facility are the people I love. Every time I think about the ones I love on the outs, it makes me angry. The reason I feel so angry is because I made a poor decision which ended up putting me in jail. If I would have taken just a milli-second to think before I decided to do what I did, I would be with the ones who show as much love and care about me as I love and care about them.

Receiving love from the people I care about most is the best feeling in the world. Even though I hate this place with all my heart and soul, thinking about these people helps me to control my anger and helps me think before I take action so I don't get in trouble.

I would rather be made fun of and get my heart and pride taken from me by those foolish people in this box and get released early rather than take matters into my own hands and get a report of bad behavior. I think if I were to take matters into my own hands, I would be acting selfish.

Not everyone realizes that being locked up not only affects you but also the people who love you. Mothers out there mourn for their children who are locked up. Girlfriends and boyfriends have sadness in their hearts every day they can't see their girl or man.

Love is such a powerful emotion than can take my mind and transfer me to the outs when I think of the ones I love. It's as if I was never in juvie. If everyone locked up thought outside of the box next time they encounter a situation that can get them in here again, I guarantee they would never end up here or in the county (jail) for the rest of their lives.

-Justin

From the Beat: We wonder how many men and women incarcerated today might be at home if they had taken a moment to think about the choices before them? How many men and women are free today, living without regret, because they gave (gave) themselves that milli-second?

Mind Your Own Business

I feel that it is important to mind your own business with the many situations that have nothing to do with you. I think that when people get carried away and start to hear things that they don't like coming out of another person's mouth, the act of hating begins.

Hating has a lot to do with inexperience. If someone has the opportunity to participate in something that you have longed to do, then you might hate on that individual because you might envy their achievements and get over appreciative. That appreciation may deflate into a state of hate because you may no longer feel as great as the person who is doing things that you have never done.

Hating is an act and a characteristic that a coward displays. Most haters have given up hope on themselves. They say to themselves "If I have no belief in myself, then I ain't about to have no kind of belief in anyone else." In some cases, it may be that people hate on the same people their families hate. This is because that is the way youth is raised from generation to generation.

-Nick

From the Beat: This is a thoughtful piece, Nick. What does that hatred do to people? How does it affect their lives? How has it affected yours? More importantly, how can you let it go?

Why Do People Hate

Hate is a strong word and has a lot of meanings. Hate turns into crimes, while you sit up there snortin' lines.

You pulled the trigger now you must face facts and be bigger.

Hate turns your life upside down while your mom keeps cryin' and your dads dyin'.

Why do we hate? We don't see it, but slowly we're wiping ourselves out.

And when you get hated on and plots and thoughts are coming for you,

What are you going to do when you are in pain and your time's slowly running out,

And you're almost close to losing to this thing called the game?

-Maria

From the Beat: How can young people who are warring with other young people (which is like warring with themselves) be made to see that they are wiping themselves out? If they could see that, do you think they'd stop?

Hate

I think hate can be created and shown in many ways. The one thing that can really target hate is jealousy. Jealousy is the feeling like when you like a girl a lot but another guy gets at her. You get real jealous because you really like her and you think he has something special that should be yours. That's a way you can get really heated and start hating someone. The real feeling behind that is that you want to have that special feeling but you have to accept that life is not fair and I hate that.

I think that people should make sure when or how they use the hate word because hate is as strong as using the word love. When you say hate to someone, that person can feel the very opposite of being loved.

Another feeling of hate is when you think something is too hard or impossible to do. Like when someone plays a certain game and they can't play it right or just mess up all the time. They start hating the game. Another related feeling to this situation is jealousy. Like when you keep trying to do the sport and you see someone else do it better, you get jealous and hate the game even more.

But the one thing that I really hate is not getting what I want. Because when I see something that I really want, I need to have it. That's just the way I am. Good thing I have my own money.

Another thing that I hate to the fullest is worrying about my mom's and my girl's safety. I know nothing will probably happen but you never know. So I make sure they're safe because I'm always there for them, ya' feel me?

Something that I know a lot of people hate over is stress. Stress, as in the future, taking care of my girl, my mom, my future baby. I also hate getting my clothes dirty. I never get them dirty but it's hard to keep it like that, ya know?

Well the one thing I hate is thinking there's a chance I might lose my mom or my wife or my baby.

-Turfstar

From the Beat: Thanks for breaking it down for us. The strongest part of your piece is when you note that hate is as strong a word as love, and should be used carefully. Do you really "hate" getting your clothes dirty, or even not getting what you want? You covered a lot of territory here. The only thing you left out is when we hate a certain food, like beets or Brussel sprouts!

Thinking

I'm sittin' in my cell
 Thinkin' 'bout what all I went through
 I'm missing my family
 Dat's one thing I do know
 I'm growing up so confused
 Not knowin' what road to choose
 I want ta cry so bad
 But I got to hold back my tears
 It feels like time is going by
 Because if I look at it
 I'm going to be eighteen
 In two more years

I'm sitting in my cell
 Wondering why I have so much pain
 Dat's hurtin' my heart
 No matter what it is or what I do
 It's just so hard to let go of my past
 I wanna change so bad
 But I just don't know how
 That's why, when I be in ma cell
 It be so much things for me
 To think about

I'm sittin' in my cell
 Thinkin' 'bout what I'ma do
 When I'm outta' my mess
 Am I gon' to continue to do me
 Or am I going to put da old me to rest
 And work on myself on bein' da best?

I don't know
 But I'ma soon find out
 'Cause all dis weak-minded shhh
 Is gettin' played out

- Princess

From The Beat: Nice flow. Do you think your mindset will change when you are out of a cell and back on the outs? What may seem played out now might become tempting again. But if you give into that temptation, you can only expect the same consequences. In fact, even worse ones since you'll soon be an adult. It's time to think seriously about the kind of future you want, and then make a plan to get there.

What Is Hatred?

Hatred is something that is driven from within ourselves. It is a versatile emotion that can be directed at ourselves or others. Hate, in itself, is a parasite. It is built off other emotions, such as anger, jealousy and insecurity, which act as the host to the parasite and feed the powerful emotion. Although it is the main cause of self-destruction and the destruction of our enemies alike, it is within human nature to experience hatred because it's been happening since the beginning of human time.

The major concern of hatred shouldn't be who we hate, but why we hate them. If people followed that, there would be a lot less hatred and violence in general. There are many people who hate others for unnecessary reasons, like the way they look, act, talk, etc... People are also brainwashed into hate in wars for money, land, oil, and other materialistic items.

-Tab

From The Beat: Yeah, hate seems to feed off other strong emotions, becoming a cycle that becomes hard to end. When someone hates you, it's difficult to not hate back in return, though Martin Luther King taught us that not hating, ultimately, may be the only way to survive.

I'm tired of being selfish

Wanting everything my way

It's time for me to focus on myself

And take one step at a time, day by day

Reality

A majority of people write about love
 But I write about life
 I'm still a young baby go-er
 Livin' my life so wrong
 I'm missin' my fannies
 I wanna go home
 But all I can do is work on myself
 And be strong
 I'm missin' ma brothers and sisters
 And seein' their smile
 But I know in my heart
 I gotta work on myself
 An' switch ma style
 I miss da old me
 The girl I knew
 But I will find her one day
 As soon as I let her through
 To bring da old girl back
 To replace the new
 I'm tired of being selfish
 Wanting everything my way
 It's time for me to focus on myself
 And take one step at a time, day by day
 I'm tired of these years
 I done wasted in my life
 It's time for me to open my eyes
 And look forward to my future
 And let go of my past
 Because I have a journey in life
 To finish my tasks

-Princess

From The Beat: What are those tasks you need to finish? The "old girl" you write about is still inside you, so tell us what she is like and how did she become the person you are now? Ultimately, the adult you are becoming will be a mix of what you've been, what you are, and what you can be—someone who can benefit from the mistakes you have made and the hardships you've endured.

The major concern of hatred shouldn't be who we hate, but why we hate them. If people followed that, there would be a lot less hatred and violence in general.

Happy Day

Today is a happy day, because my wife send me pics of her and my baby and I had a long time without seein' them. Damn, it felt good inside. My heart just looking at their faces. It cheers me up when I feel stressed out or mad. I just look at my pictures and say to myself, "Today is a happy day."

-Lil' Stranger

From The Beat: Tell us more about your family. How old is your baby? Will the fact that you have made a baby also make you change anything about the way you live your life? After all, if you feel happy just looking at their faces, think of how happy you can make them by bringing yourself back into their lives where they can see you every day and not have to send you pictures of themselves. What are your hopes and what are your fears about your future and your baby's?

Wishing I Was At Home

What makes my mind travel to the outs is when I think about my family and my homies, especially when I think about my girl. When I call my parents, I wish I could talk to them in person instead of on the phone. I wish I was at my house with my family and my homies just kicking back and chopping it up. I can't wait till I get out of this hell hole.

-Edward

From The Beat: Of course you miss your family and homies and doing the things you like doing. That's the point of jail, to make you remember what you're giving up. How much do you hate this "hell hole?" Enough to take responsibility for the things that brought you here and change them?

Why Do People Hate

People hate for many different reasons
 They hate 'cause they want what you got.
 They hate 'cause every night they sit in
 their miserable life and wish on a star they were you.
 They wish they had it like me.
 They hate 'cause I'm a 17 year old independent woman.
 They hate because they want my life.
 They hate because they wish they were as smart as me.
 They hate because I'm a young female and I got more
 homeboys than homegirls.
 They hate 'cause these fools trying to get at me and got
 rejected.
 They hate 'cause I'm in jail and I still got a smile.
 Haters only hate 'cause they can't be like you.
 In reality you are like a master to them.
 They hate and try to pretend.
 They try to act like you, be like you.
 My definition of haters = jealousy.
 They hate 'cause at a young age I started this.
 They hate 'cause I've been dodging bullets
 as these haters get closer to taking my life.
 I ain't scared for my life
 'cause haters is everywhere.
 They never go away.
 or will never fade away.
 Because that's just it, females wish they had it
 like me.
 Never felt the need to sell my good confidence
 even on hungry nights.
 Haters hate 'cause at age nine I was introduced
 to hustlin', paying bills, school and street smarts.
 I ain't never disrespected myself that's why I got all
 this respect from homeboys all around that know
 what I'm about.
 Envy and hate is all haters got.

-Giggles

From the Beat: Hate and pride seem to go hand in hand in your poem, Giggles. Pride in yourself and in your ability to survive seems to have inspired hate in others. Seems though, that just as you can't dodge bullets for the rest of your life, you can't dodge so much hatred either. In the end, we need to figure out how to inspire love and respect in others instead of hatred. When you say you've never disrespected yourself, we wonder if that includes respecting your own freedom...

Why People Hate

They hate when they are hurt by another person.
 They hate because their siblings did something to them to show that person
 how to hate.
 They hate by the only reason that they are different.
 They hate by the difference of culture, country, skin color, gangs, attitudes or
 feelings.

-Libany

From the Beat: Can you take your writing a little further next time? Use examples of your own experiences in life to back up your points. In everything you write, examples always make the point stronger.

Ignoring The Haters

People love to hate on a young black man like myself. Labels are thrown at me all the time. They ask me how do I ignore all this hatred. I tell them my shine can't be stopped. My life is real crazy and I don't have time to show the haters attention. The haters are everywhere I go, but I stay away from them by keeping it moving and keeping my head up.

-Will

From the Beat: You're an example to us all. Keep dodging those labels Will, and keep your head up. As to whether "they" can stop your shine or not, it appears (by your being here) that you can stop your shine. So what are you going to change to make sure you don't stop it?

Lily, Scale, Sword

Why do you hate me,
 You hate what you don't understand,
 Why can't you admit it,
 You hate on me,
 I know why, but why?
 I treat you well, and with respect,
 I understand, but I don't get it,
 Why am I confused, my IQ's 140,
 But I chose to live this life,
 Yes I chose,
 I regret it now, yes I do,
 But I understand why I do what I do,
 Do you?

They call me crazy,
 Yes,
 I am indeed,
 But better than you,
 Yes I am,
 You deny, yes,
 I choose what I do,
 Do you,
 You follow the crowd,
 Indeed,
 You bluster and brag,
 But it's all a front,
 Just be you,
 I might like the you that was,
 The chicks would too, I bet,
 So all in all, just be you.

Pray to the lily of purity,
 The scales of judgment,
 And the sword of justice.

-Ronin

From the Beat: Thank you for the poem Ronin. For those that don't know, in Japanese history, Ronin were master less samurai (warriors) that roamed the country and lived by a strict code of honor. Do you have such a code of honor? Did you violate your own code to lead yourself here? How will you lead yourself away from here permanently?

Dream Vacation

Cold life, bangin' pipes, slammin' stones on ice
 Crazy days, sealed vices, not enough blankets at night
 Makin' reactions and not even thinkin' twice
 A young fella just tryin' to live right
 It's stop right now, just waitin' for green lights
 I'm tired of bein' judged
 PO ain't showin' no love
 But I ain't really givin' a what...
 Sav it out, tough luck and I'm stuck in a tomb like King Tut
 This life ain't give me shhh
 Pay backs a real dish
 Time to move on and leave this
 I need a get away vacation from bs
 I wouldn't return from that vacation
 Re-learn and keep my location
 Hide away from discrimination
 After I face what I'm facin'

-Young P

From the Beat: Hope you get to that destination, Young P. Wherever that place turns out to be, just make sure it isn't another place like this!

Thinkin' Outside the Box

Sometimes when I'm in my room, I start to think about hella shhh, like what I'm tryna' do when I get out and what I don't need to be doin'. The problem is that I get too many opportunities to do that. I need to stay out of this place.

-Nundo

From the Beat: So, what are you trying to do when you get out, and what do you need to stop doing? It sounds like you know the answers to these questions, but knowledge is not enough. You also need courage and determination. Do you have those qualities?

Day By Day

Day by day we steady gettin' older
 Livin' in San Francisco
 Where it is much colder
 Luckily enough everyone could breathe
 'Cause if not, we'd be hurtin'
 Like a baby when it teethes
 Why does this place
 Have to be a corrupt area?
 But it's nothin' for rappers
 Who call the this the "Yay Area"
 Rippers and drugs on almost every corner
 Most people say it's 'Cause this is California
 What about the people who don't do nothin' wrong
 But still end up shot when they been prayin' to God all along?
 I'm tired of this shhh that goes down
 'Cause everywhere ya walk there's homeless layin' on the ground

-Tyler

From The Beat: You write of the gritty and poverty stricken side of San Francisco, the one that tourists and perhaps even many of the cities residents avoid. Where do the solutions lie? How much are you contributing to your own unhappiness, and how much can you control whatever changes you'd like to see in your life and world?

Thinking Outside the Box

Damn, dat's kind of hard
 It's like living in a fake fairy tale
 With no hopes and dreams
 All these demons filling my head
 All these problems dat I have
 I mean I got 97 days left
 But I don't really care
 As I sit here thinking outside da box
 I wonder if this is all you think you're worth
 Being behind bars ain't nothing but a chicken wing
 It's da time I'm wasting dat gets me da madness
 All dis time I could have been doing something important
 Thinking outside da box
 Is like pretending there isn't a 23-year-old telling you what to do
 These people make me laugh
 Thinking outside da box
 Is like letting everyone know how it really is
 I miss ma folks and I miss my good life
 I miss cup cakin'
 I miss doing what I do best
 I mean thinking outside da box is not always
 Negative nor positive
 It's a mixture of all my emotions
 I feel trapped inside dis box
 No way out as da days quickly seem to pass by
 I don't wish upon a star for an early release
 I ain't trippin' my time is coming soon
 All these dark nights
 Sitting in my room
 Counting down my days
 It ain't no three digit numbers no more
 Thinking outside da box for what lives in reality
 I'm locked up. . .

-Giggles

From the Beat: We appreciate the unemotional description of reality that you brought to this poem, Giggles. But what we wonder is how you plan to change this reality when you walk out of here. It's got to be more than just counting down the days. How are you using those days that you're counting down to make it more likely you can hold onto your freedom?

My Dreams

Today I'm going to write about a dream I had. I have been having this dream since I've been here. My dream is to get out of here and be there for my daughter and my family because I miss them and I'm not there for them right now. I'm going to be away from my daughter for five months. I'm going to camp. When I get out, I'm going to spend more time with my family and my daughter and stay out of trouble and show my lil' daughter what's right and what's wrong because I don't want her to end up like me. That's one of my dreams.

Another dream is to make a big difference in my life before it is too late and get out of this system and be a good father for my daughter and a good example. That's my dream. I hope it comes true.

-Lil' R

From the Beat: (We had to change your Beat name because the one you chose could be interpreted differently by different people.) Sounds like both dreams are one and the same. The most important thing you said was that you're going to "show" your daughter what's right. She will follow what she sees you do, not what you tell her to do, so ask yourself when you do something if you'd like her to be doing it too. If the answer is no, then don't do it!

In The Meantime, In Between Time

Well, I think about my family all day, every day, because for the last couple of weeks it's been bad for me and my family. No lie. real rap. Sometimes I go on day dreaming, wishing I was with my family and a couple of my friends on the outs getting my money like a real man! But now, it is what it is and I ain't going to be in here forever and what don't kill me is going to make me stronger! But in the meantime and between time, I am going to do my time.

-Ju

From The Beat: We're sorry that things have not been going well for you or your family. What can you do to change this picture? How does "a real man" get his money?

This is For My Girl

Baby, I miss you!
 You must've put a spell on my mind
 Come give me some of your time
 Damn, you fine
 And your kisses taste like wine
 Now I'm sitting here
 All alone, reminiscing
 About the time we had
 The love we shared
 And now you're missing
 'Cause you're that girl
 That has that part of me
 You have the key
 To my heart
 I was your potion
 You were my recipe
 I miss you, baby
 You're probably waiting for me to come back
 I appear like a mirage
 So every time it makes you sad
 'Cause you reach out to me
 But I'm just a vision
 Like an angel coming from heaven
 And to get with you
 Was a mission
 But I know now
 That I'm down again
 There's no time to be friends
 Because I promise I will be there
 'Til the end

-D

From The Beat: Being in and out of the hall takes its toll on relationships—be it parents, siblings or girlfriends. As you say, you must seem like a "mirage" to those that love you. As long as you give your freedom away (which is what you do every time you give the system power over your life), then you really can't keep this promise to "be here 'til the end." When you're here, you can't be there. Think about it.

To All Da Homies

I just wanted to write something for all the big homies, little homies and just homies. I wanted to write in The Beat for them because without them I wouldn't be posted on the block every day. I probably wouldn't even come outside because when I'm with them, I feel safe because I know they got my back. I can't say that they got me through everything, but they got me through a lot.

I also want to say RIP to a lot of my big homies because they helped me grow up into the shady hyper that I am.

-Phil

From the Beat: You can expand on this piece. We want to know more about the homies that have helped you through life. Who were they and how did they help you? Are they also part of the reason you're in the hall? It's unfortunate that you need so many people to watch your back when you step outside. On the outside you depend on them and on the inside you depend on staff. Will you ever get to be an independent adult?

Always Fighting

Me and my mom are always fighting verbally. There are a lot of reasons why, but I was not feeling the things that she did. I can't really explain how the arguments start, but it always ends the same way, with me cussin' her out and being hella' disrespectful. I was trying to help her with some things that she needed help with, but she wanted no advice from me. So I left and came back to the same thing.

Now I know she can really handle things on her own. We have turned into way different people and we help each other by letting us do it on our own. We have learned from our mistakes which has brought me here but I am still learning as I read, write and listen.

-Mr. Kabb

From The Beat: Just as your relationship with your mom has matured into something better than it was, you yourself have matured in a much more thoughtful and responsible person. You came in a boy, but it appears to us that you'll be leaving a man. That's an accomplishment!

Lost Angels

-Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF)-

JTTF — Sgt. Moore: Hey boys come on in and let us know how things went down over there?

O. Baker: It went down behind a neighborhood ice cream truck. Can you believe it... not a shot fired! We caught them by surprise playing X-box 360 in the living room with the door wide open. Like taking candy from a baby.

D. Larson: They had a house full of kids! When the truck passed by the house the kids gave us the signal to proceed.

Gang Task Force — Lt. Felton: You gotta be kidding?

O. Baker: Kids left the door wide open for us. Larson, and his crew took the back! Me and Wilson came right through the wide open front door. I think they may have smoked a little too much weed. We saw them earlier outside having a blunt on the porch, then they go right back in and play video games.

P. Wilson: Paid no attention to the street at all! That weed is some good shhh... make you forget about everything. We were only three houses from the location and nobody paid any attention to us.

Lt. Felton: Shhh for brains, I love it! We should be through in a few hours then we'll let you guys have 'em.

O. Baker: Yeah, we got reports to finish up anyway so that sounds good to me. Hey, those guys got a lot of drugs in the house too! X, crack! Looks more like a stash house. All the kids really make it scary. The drugs and guns were found in a padlocked closet in the master bedroom.

Sgt. Moore: I think we should interview the driver first... Pete Loc. Keep them separated. We'll tell Casper, Pete Loc ratted on him!

D. Larson: Good idea... they can't know much, they're just Juvy's. Casper, is the oldest at it! Too bad they can't fry for this one, but the state no longer executes Juvy's.

P. Wilson: Man, to be a juvy and get 'all day' is a freakin' execution! Every single day you die! Ok listen, if you're 17 now, let's say you live another 60 years; that will make you 77 years old! And you're still doin' time.

D. Larson: You might live to be a 100 years old! You know the Dept. of Corrections gonna keep you healthy. They need that money. You get good health care, food, exercise, real estate.

O. Baker: Man, that's depressing. I'm outta hear. Hay, let us know when you guys are finished.

Phone Rings—

Sgt. Moore: Yeah?

The Captain: Hey, we need homicide to take the first crack. I just got a call from Croft! Is Wilson and Baker there?

Sgt. Moore: Yeah.

This next writer, who writes us from Soledad State Prison, sends us some an excerpt from a book he's writing called, "Lost Angels." This is what he had to say about it in his letter to us: "This is a must read for those who live in a culture of police corruption, unjustified homicides and the rise of inner city school dropouts, incarcerations and death..." "...I am very eager to have someone of your caliber and reputation to take a good look at this project for 2008. I am in great need of some notes, or any advice on this 'groundbreaking' subject; I find myself formulating." Well, we don't have the time to take a good look at it unless we're using it for The Beat Within publication. So, since we did look at it and really enjoyed it, we decided to edit it and put it in The Beat Within. We think it's very creative to dialogue between law enforcement about what's going on in the streets because we find that police know a lot about what's going on for some reason. But what we found most interesting about the excerpt is that it pointed out many ills that are going on in our communities today. It pointed to how people are killing their own people, either directly like in gun fire or indirectly like in drug sales. It pointed to the fact that most law-abiding citizens within these communities are frightened to say anything to the police for fear of retaliation. And it also pointed to how reactionary the police are and usually that when we're reacting to something, we're usually not being effective or we're not on time. Where are all the preventive forces trying to help poverty stricken communities such as the one Steve so brilliantly described in this excerpt. We feel like this project will be a great one and it is our hope that Steve will be able to share more with us. If you need more feedback Steve, please let us know. But keep in mind, this is a weekly publication with few staff and many workshops, so our time for extra-curricular things is limited. However, we really enjoyed this excerpt and hope to hear more from you soon. Thank you for your incredible insight. Not only Watts, but the world needs it..."

One of the largest projects in the Watts area, the Imperial Courts, was now known by JTTF to be connected in the distribution of these drugs from Compton and Long Beach where big drug purchases were being made throughout the city. The Imperial Courts, one of the most dangerous locations in the state of California, located on Imperial and Central Avenues, right next door to the famous Nickerson Garden Projects (made famous in the 1960's as the location of the Watts Riots) was also one of the most deadly gang areas in the city. The entire Imperial project was known to be completely under the control of the Crip Gang, with a very sophisticated drug operation, though the headquarters were the Imperial Courts. Money and drugs were being exchanged all over the city and many turf wars were being ignited by the large scale of the Imperial Court drug operation. The purity of the dope was shocking!! Drug and Gang Task Force had tried for years to break into the drug gang situations in the Imperial Courts, but were always unsuccessful, because of the elaborate way the projects were built. Most of the time, before they could even get close to an arrest, suspects would be tipped-off by workers whose only job was to identify law enforcement heading into the projects with cell phone chirp operations. Lookouts were at all points of entry and exits. The Imperial Courts Project was also run by the Federal Housing Authority, who offered some information, but was limited in their investigative processes for obtaining an arrest. JTTF and Compton Law Enforcement had opened an investigation, because of information revealed recently concerning the killings in Compton and possible drug involvement, but they were also limited in scope and needed more information.

At the Compton Sheriff's Department, Lt. Felton, from the Gang Task Force and Sgt. Moore, from the JTTF, were preparing notes for the initial interview and investigation of the 2 murder suspects now in custody, Pete- Loc (Perez Maza) 16, and Casper (Jose Sanchez) 17! Jose Sanchez, arrested just last year for minor drug possession and Perez, arrested this year in February 2006, for receiving stolen property, and given three years formal probation both lived in Compton and were members of the Compton Siders, who also appeared to be heavy suppliers of drugs throughout the neighboring cities.

Lt. Felton: Casper is the shooter, right?

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Sgt. Moore: Yeah, eyewitness accounts say he leaned out the passenger side window and shot at the three coming out of the swap meet. You know, we need to get over to the Juvy sometime this weekend and speak again with Mr. E.P., don't you think?

Lt. Felton: Good idea! We also need more information on the drug distribution. Reports from the scene over there in South Central say these two guys had a house full of X, guns, money, and crack and they're still searching.

Sgt. Moore: Good! I'm glad we got the first report before homicide gets a crack at 'em. It's always good to have the first interview.

Captain: Ok, let them know we have a change of plans to take the first investigations.

Sgt. Moore: Gotcha! Hey guys, hold on! I just got a call from the Captain. They need homicide on the first investigation.

O. Baker: Oh shhh, here we go with the musical chairs. Thought we had a break.

P. Wilson: Ok, we're on it Sgt.

Sgt. Moore: I think I'll take a break and go check out the Imperial Courts projects in Watts! Felton, Larson, you wanna ride?

Lt. Felton: Sounds like fun... let's go check it out.

P. Wilson: What the hell's going on in the Imperial Courts?

Sgt. Moore: Some undercover shhh we got goin' on. We'll let you know about it later Perry. For now though... you got work to do!

O. Baker: You have a right to remain silent. You have the right to have an attorney present during the investigation. If you give up those rights, anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. Do you understand these rights Mr. Perez?

(The young Hispanic male was barely 5 feet tall. Approximately 105 lbs, bald head, heavy dark eye brows, large tattoo on the left cheek, various other tattoo's on arms and upper torso. A large tattoo of Compton across the stomach. Baggy khaki pants (grey), white t- shirt and Nike Cortez tennis shoes (all white). The young man didn't appear nervous or upset at all about his present circumstances, but had an appearance of casualty about the entire incident. Never spoke a word during the arrest or questioning at the location. D.O.B. 11-03-90.)

Pete Loc: Yeah, I understand that!

O. Baker: So you don't mind if we question you?

Pete Loc: Whatever.

O. Baker: Ok, Mr. Maza. My name is Oliver Baker. My partner here is Mr. Perry Wilson. We're homicide detectives for the Compton Sheriff's Department. If there is anything you don't understand during this questioning please feel free to inquire. We are just looking for some answers on the shooting on November 19, 2006. Oh, Happy Birthday! I see you were born 11-3-90, right?

Pete Loc: That's right.

O. Baker: Well did you enjoy your 16th birthday? I hear that is supposed to be a big celebration in the Hispanic community?

Pete Loc: Not really.

P. Wilson: Could you tell us what you did on November 19, 2006?

Pete Loc: I just kicked it around the house, nothing else!

P. Wilson: How long have you known "Casper," Jose Sanchez?

Pete Loc: All my life! We were raised together in the same hood.

P. Wilson: From the same gang too, huh?

Pete Loc: We're from Compton. What? That's our neighborhood.

O. Baker: Who are your enemies in Compton? (Pete Loc just looked at detective Baker with cold eyes without speaking)

Pete Loc: We don't have no enemies! All we got is haters! I hate haters! You people are always in somebody else's business; that's what haters do.

O. Baker: I feel you on that Mr. Maza! How about these black gangs out here in Compton... like the Compton Damu?

Pete Loc: What about 'em?

P. Wilson: I hear that your neighborhood, and Compton Damu been having problems over an old drug transaction? What's up wit that?

Pete Loc: Nothing that I know of.

P. Wilson: How do you feel about black people?

Pete Loc: What about 'em?

P. Wilson: You know with all the race riots at the schools, race is a big thing in the city now. Some blacks think Mexicans are trying to take over.

Pete Loc: They always crying about something. I don't feel nothing about 'em.

O. Baker: Do you have any black friends or neighbors?

Pete Loc: No!

O. Baker: Let's talk about November 19, Mr. Maza! You have been identified as the driver of a 2005 Denali SUV, at the Compton Swap Meet on this date with your homeboy "Casper" being the passenger. Do you remember that?

Pete Loc: I can't remember where I was in the 19th of November.

P. Wilson: Ok, let's stop playing games "Loc!" You, young man are a suspect in the murder of a 5 year old African American girl during a shooting incident at the Compton

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Swap Meet parking lot. Whether you remember or not, you're going to prison for this Sir, and this is your opportunity right now to keep from being in prison for the rest of your life for accessory to murder, aiding and abetting, with special circumstances for the benefit of a Gang.

O. Baker: That's right Pete Loc we got the stereo shop owner who places you at the Swap Meet on 11/19/06, plus eyewitnesses in the parking lot. Your homeboy Casper already said that you were the one with the gun.

Pete Loc just laughed at the detectives. He knew they would try to come with the scare tactics and he would "put it on his life," that Casper would never say that he was the one with the gun. He thought to himself that they did make a few mistakes but... so what, that's a Gangsta's life. He envisioned him, and his homie Casper, walking the yard somewhere up north in prison, but one thing he learned well from the hood is to never get weak and fall for the tricks of law enforcement, never snitch, and he knew Casper felt the same.

P. Wilson: That's right Mr. Maza, eyewitnesses saw you drive out of the parking lot at the Compton Swap Meet while your homeboy Casper was doing the shooting at rival gang members "EP," and "D-Day." Do you know these two?

Pete Loc: Never heard of 'em!

O. Baker: Well, your homie missed, but shot and killed a 5 year old girl! What do you feel about that, Big Gangsta?

Pete Loc: I don't feel nothing! I feel like you wasting my time.

O. Baker: No... it's you that's goin' to be wasting your time sir! The detective got up and snatched Maza by the throat and held him against the wall. "I'm not a 5 year old girl! I'll beat your little skinny butt punk! Say something smart. Say anything Gangsta Loc!"

P. Wilson walked over and grabbed his partner O. Baker. He didn't know if he was playing the, "Good Cop," "Bad Cop," trick or was really upset, but... Wilson had to play his part.

P. Wilson: Hold on Baker, we could get in trouble for this. Look at the guy... he's turning red, can't breath, come on Baker...let him go.

O. Baker: I'll kill this asshole. If it was my daughter, asshole... you wouldn't have to go to prison.

O. Baker, finally let go and turned his back on the suspect. He walked out of the room slamming the door. P. Wilson talked to Maza very gently and slowly, calming him down after the incident.

P. Wilson: You all right man? I knew my partner couldn't handle this investigation with him being black you know. I'm gonna talk to the Captain to see if I can get him off this case! Is your neck alright? Do you need to see the doctor?

Pete Loc: I'm straight!

The three middle aged white law enforcement officers sat in a white undercover vehicle outside the Watts housing projects in a gas station on Imperial near Central Avenue. Sgt. Moore, (JTTF), Lt. Felton (Compton Drug Task Force),

and Sgt. D. Larson (Gang Task Force). Compton drug dealers had already been notified of their presence in the projects and arrangements were being made to relocate drug profits and drugs to other locations. Moments later a yellow taxi showed up to take profits out of the projects. Later, a tow truck came through to pick up an old Chevy loaded with guns, drugs and drug equipment locked in the trunk. The operation was smooth and everything went as planned. Customers were rerouted to another location not far from the Imperial Courts. Some were given 'double-ups' for the extra effort. Money continued to be collected non-stop as it appeared that a sting was being set-up.

Sgt. Moore: What is today... Friday? Man, this place is rockin' and rollin' and it's not even nightfall yet. You can see the energy.

Lt. Felton: Yeah, there's enough traffic for a lot of profits. Everything and everyone is moving non-stop... Hell, this is the heart of their city... the main artery of Watts.

Sgt. Larson: Guaranteed! Can you estimate the profits from this little operation Lt?

Lt. Felton: Nothing little about this one Sgt. This is just the main post. They got heavy weight on the Westside. This operation may be larger than we think. We need more federal aid.

Sgt. Moore: You ring?

Sgt. D. Larson: How the hell does this tie into the Compton drug war?

Lt. Felton: It's a drug war... Sgt! Compton- Siders can't make no money nowhere in town. That's why they were sitting on all that stash in South Central on Hooper Ave. It's the same little thing that happens all the time until the enemy of the Big Dope realizes that he can't make no money and decides to buy his dope from the 'Big Baller,' who today happens to be Imperial Courts Crips. Once they start purchasing form the 'Big Baller,' he cuts 'em a little slack and finds another location to turn out. Soon, he has everyone working for him. Classic operation! He doesn't need the spot anymore because he's already getting all the profits from the guys he was at war with. Turns his enemy into his employee.

Sgt. Moore: You haven't missed a beat Lt! Same war all the time. We see it all over the country. Especially on the East Coast but they're able to hold on to operations a lot longer and there's not such a threat with other gangs like on the West Coast, but they are threatened with other gangs like on the West Coast. Out here 2 or 3 gangs could click up and put the courts out of business. If they make too many mistakes in other hoods, they'll start coming after their ass like Army Ants.

Lt. Felton: The drug economy had changed, these guys are making real bucks. Driving \$80,000 cars and living in million dollar houses with beautiful women, bank accounts and businesses.

Sgt. Moore: That's another reason why information has become so cheap, these dealers don't want to leave that lifestyle for shhh. The profits are high. The stakes are high, so is the murder rate and the rate of information given to law enforcement.

Sgt. Larson: Now... add all that to the gang scene in Los

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Angeles and you got some crazy shhh goin' on. Sgt. Moore, how would the Joint Terrorism Task Force handle this type of operation?

Sgt. Moore: Not unless it was absolutely necessary. Several years ago we were involved in the 'Long Beach Bust' where tons of cocaine were seized without us ever being mentioned. This is how we like to operate... as a reliable maverick branch of the government when it comes to high level criminal behavior. We have small cells of highly trained, locally based investigators, analysts, linguists, SWAT experts and other specialists from dozens of US law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Keeping a low profile is a 'must.' We've been active in many operations that you would never even think of. Every major city has some kind of drug problem. Some more than others. In a city like Los Angeles, city budgets get overspent and you only have a limited amount of resources to combat the major importation and distribution of drugs. Add to that, the West Coast Gang Nation is the City of Los Angeles. Not to mention the high unemployment and poverty rates among the inner-city black males sitting right next door to the border of Mexico. There are so many factors involved Lt, it would take a study group to define the real objectives. So this is one of our advantages of being employed by the federal government with an unlimited amount of resources, we can come in and help local law enforcement in areas of major crime that they might not be prepared for. A city has to be careful. These drug profits are huge and can help gangs obtain political favor if in the right hands. That's why it is necessary to come in and disrupt, confuse and alter certain environments sometimes, but the war never stops.

Lt. Felton: I see, sounds like some heavy weight shhh, huh? You're right Sgt., about these huge profits getting into the wrong hands. I was reading the New York Times this summer about a guy in New York who got arrested for handling drugs for gangs.

Sgt. Moore: That was Jacob the Jeweler, they arrested outside of his store in Manhattan. The guy makes all the jewelry for the rap heads and drug dealers. He was arrested for laundering money for some kind of "Black Mafia Family," gang on the East Coast. I never really followed the case, but a sure example of the profits available to inner-city dealers, if they were organized it would surely be a much bigger threat, but as long as they're buying jewelry, cars and homes and killing one another it's no major problem. Eventually the feds will come in to confiscate all the property and profits... 90% of the time.

Sgt. Larson: Sgt, turn your radio up I think we got a call.

Female Voice: All available units in the Watts area... possible gang shooting... 1-0-3 Willowbrook. one down, possible gang shooting.

Sgt. Moore: Hey, let's check it out. It's about a mile... hit the light Lt.

The undercover vehicle bolted out of the gas station full speed and headed west on Imperial. Right on Central Ave; another right on 103rd St, and down to Willowbrook. When they arrived at the location, local law enforcement were on the scene. A crowd formed around a 2007 Audi, dark gray with large rims and tires! Front and back windows had been shot out. An African American teenage girl sat in the middle of the street next to the driver's side door opened cuddling the bleeding face and head of a teenage male victim whom

everyone at the scene knew had expired... except the young girl holding his head hollering... "Cory!"

Girl: Please don't die Cory! Breathe damn it! Shhh, breathe for me Cory, please breathe. I love you Cory don't leave me; breathe damn it! Shhh Cory, look at you.

She had to be wrestled from the victim by police. She totally lost it.

Girl: No, no! Let me go, please let me go; he'll breathe for me. Cory! Cory! Stop it! They won't let me go Cory. You said you love me Cory Baby! Please say something! Look at you Cory!

The young girl started screaming uncontrollably and had to be taken to the Mental Health Unit at Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital. The pregnant teenage young girl was taken away while the police investigators and Watts Homicide detectives tried to get information from the police. The young African American male who appeared to be no older than 17 had been shot at close range. One in the temple area and another bullet through the head. He lay in a messy pool of blood with a white sheet covering the torso. The crime scene was disturbed by the young female passenger, but investigators did the best they could with the location. Two 9mm shell casings had been found at the scene immediately. Also, a member of the Watts gang task force positively identified the body.

Watts Gang Task Force: Shhh we're gonna have a long weekend now. That's little Cory Perry from G St. He's one of the respected gangstas' from that hood. The three introduced themselves.

Lt. Felton: You know this guy?

Watts Task Force: Unfortunately, yes!

Lt. Felton: I'm Lt. Felton with the Compton Task Force Gang Unit. This is Sgt. Moore, Joint Terrorist Task Force and Sgt. D. Larson, Drug Task Force Captain. We were just on Imperial checking the Courts out. Heard the call and decided to come. What's up with the victim?

Watts Gang Task Force: Nothing now, he's through, but there will be drama behind this one. He's a younger brother of an O.G. from G St. Watts, who are presently at war with the projects. It's some crazy stuff. They're all Crips. We got four murders in the last few days between the two. This makes number five, and before the sun goes down it's guaranteed to be a couple more.

Lt. Felton: Did anyone see the shooting?

Watts Task Force: Don't know. My partner's over there interviewing now. The girl is Cynthia Butler, the victims girlfriend. We were just at his house the other day. Her brother's a Damu from the Gardens project and she's by a Crip. This upset the brother. He tried to stop his sister from seeing Cory and a fight broke out at Cory's house with 4 or 5 members from both gangs. Watts is crazy man!

Most of the residents in Watts were very cautious about speaking to the police about anything. Homicide detectives and Task Force officers weren't getting anywhere with the crowd that had now formed near the location. Most said they didn't see anything, only heard.

*It's so exciting watching you grow,
Even though you're only a month old.
I can't wait 'til we can talk,
So many stories to be told,
so many secrets to unfold.*

A few issues back in our editorial note, we welcomed a new life into the world. Our very own, Will Roy, The Poetic Prisoner, just a had a very cute and healthy little boy. We were wondering what would bring Will out of his "not writing" streak and we figured it would be the birth of his son. The following two poems are an account of why we feel him to be so special. He's constantly learning, not only from his mistakes, but the mistakes that have been made by the people closest to him, to give the rest of us a better understanding. We enjoy him in the office and we wish him and his beautiful family the best. He's been working in our office for four years now and we've appreciated every minute of it.

Dear Lil' Will

You've finally came,
And I want to welcome you into the world in a special way.
The time 3:47 in the morning,
August 3rd was the day.
It's the year 2007,
You came out of the womb 21.8 inches long.
You weighed 8 pounds and 9 ounces,
And you're already hella strong.
You're healthy and that's all I was worried about,
Everything else will fall in place.
You had a head full of hair,
And weren't deformed like other babies — you have the
cutest little face.
Everyone says you look like me,
It's the greatest compliment.
However, appearance can be dangerous,
Especially when it's the only reason for one's confidence.
So remain as curious as you are now,
Interest breeds understanding.
Understanding gives us life,
So always ask without demanding.
I know you'll be a great kid,
You already seem so intelligent.
You're focusing on what matters,
And disregarding what's irrelevant.
It's so exciting watching you grow,
Even though you're only a month old.
I can't wait 'til we can talk,
So many stories to be told, so many secrets to unfold.
And like I said before,
I'm going to teach you everything I know.
Which probably isn't much,
But my thoughts are my most prized possessions.
I've made many mistakes,
So I've learned my share of lessons.
One of the most important ones I've learned
Was from your grandfather, you know, my dad
And that's I'll never leave your side,
I need to be present to give you all I never had.
Your grandma taught me a great lesson, too.
Even the realest women can't teach a boy to be a man.
Your mama gave you your two feet,
But only a positive male role model can teach you to
stand.
I wanna be that for you,
I'm gonna give you a firm foundation.
I'm anxious to understand you,
I have a feeling you'll teach me patience.
Even right now as I'm watching you sleep,
I find myself yearning to see your dreams.

I want to share your smiles,
And search together for what everything means.
You have an amazing support system,
Your grandmothers love you tremendously.
When you're around they light up,
And begin caring for you relentlessly.
Bottle feeding, diaper changing,
There's nothing they can't do.
And when me and your mama show concern,
They tell us, "Back off, we're the ones who raised you!"
I trust 'em,
I think I'm just over-protective.
You mean more than the world to me,
Never do I want you to feel neglected.
As your father, I want to have fun,
But still be respected.
And when you're old enough to hold a conversation,
I want you to point out anything I'm doing that's defective.
And if I reject it — blatantly refuse to accept it,
Then please have patience.
For some times I like to take my time,
But I always don't like keeping people waitin'...
Especially you — my first-born son,
The prince to my throne.
Bond so strong I never wanna leave,
And miss you the instant I'm not home.
I have a picture of us on my desk at work,
I put it there for motivation.
I've had many influences on my life,
But you're my most prized inspiration.
I'm overcome with elation,
Whenever you give me that toothless smile.
And I can already see it in your eyes,
You are a very intelligent child.
You love music,
You even try to bob yo' head to the beat.
And the only time you'll stop
Is when you're ready to eat.
You really enjoy that breast milk,
You drink a whole bottle in one sitting.
I try to substitute it with formula,
But formula's just ammunition for spitting.
I won't get into the other rhyming S word,
But you do a lot of that, too.
In fact you do it so much,
Your baby nickname is poo-poo.
There's a lot we're going to go through,
Or at least that's the plan.
This is your daddy signing off,
I'll write another one when you're old enough to
understand.

*And when you're old enough to hold a conversation,
I want you to point out anything I'm doing that's defective.*

My Dear Unborn Child

Allow me to introduce myself,
 I'm your one and only father.
 I'm so happy you're my son,
 Even though I'd be content with having a daughter.
 I can't wait 'til you come out,
 I'm trying my best to prepare.
 Some people recognize you're a blessing,
 Most tell me to beware.
 But really I don't care,
 You're my main priority now.
 People's opinions hold no weight,
 Their ways of thinking are out of style.
 You've got the blood of a survivor,
 There will be nothing you can't handle.
 Plus, I'll be there 'til the end,
 From before you blow out your first candle.
 You have amazing support,
 And your mother is a queen.
 The day I found out you'd be our prince,
 It was like living in a dream.
 And to me, what does all this mean?
 First off, I've planted my seed,
 Share responsibility of your life with a gorgeous woman,
 We'll give you everything you need.

Nurture you so you can grow,
 Teach you everything I know.
 Won't ever kick you out the door
 'Til you feel ready to go...
 So take your time — take it slow,
 The world is getting colder.
 Have fun every moment you can,
 'Cause before you know it childhood's over.
 There's more than one way to be a soldier,
 So pursue being one with purpose.
 For as you get older,
 The things you value prematurely will end up being
 worthless.
 Let education be your temptation,
 Lovers come and leave.
 There's a surplus of resources out here,
 So have abundance without greed.
 Well there's so much I wanna learn from you,
 So much I wanna teach.
 And soon you'll be here,
 Well-within reach.
 I want you to know I'm always here,
 Through thick and thin.
 And when you come out I promise
 To write to you again.

SLEEPY

Sometimes the cycles of violence in our communities get so frustrating that we just want to grab and shake the people killing each other with the hopes that they will recognize just what they're doing. Well, we got a letter from the Glen Mills Schools in Concordville, Pennsylvania that is pretty much tired of seeing his people kill each other. We think it's a must read, let us know what you think...

A Call To La Raza

The barrio is our country! For our love of and loyalty for it, we died spent our lives in prison for it. The b-s has to stop. We as Raza are not the so-called minority of the world. We don't beg to be heard. We remain strong through the hard times that came to face each and every one of us.

For the homeboys who are really down for the barrio, we would educate our minds so we could do something positive in the barrio, we don't have to sell dope or pull licks to make feria (money), how about going to school and being legit so that we could give back to our gente in the community, and make real money, we're killing our people thru drugs, for what so we could by distractions that disguise our real self, who are we trying to impress think about it. Be yourself.

You're hiding behind your own shadow. Stop the crimes! Stop the backstabbing! Organize! Plan our goals and put them into action! Educate your mind! Read books! Learn the new, and don't forget the past, which has made you the reason you are. We must learn to take pride in who we are and demand recognition. True barrio warriors who carried banners of their calling with heads held high, back ever to the wind, make future attempts to change our evil ways. We ran about the streets like creators of the night seeking our fame and fortune in an impoverished landscape. That landscape offered us little hope gave us only the bumps and bruises that our broken and bullet ridden bodies bore from the countless street wars fought throughout the barrios of California.

Us Raza chase each other down as if we were raptors in some primordial hunt for a wild game. But a game it was not! Much blood was shed along with all the hopes, dreams and ambitions of a tomorrow that were not sure we will ever see, we were disenfranchised men who saw ourselves as dispensers of life's tragedies. Young men who harbored little regard for a society incapable of embracing us as equals and acknowledge our inherent worth as human beings! In our apocalyptic world, the inner city, a pool of crime and poverty orbiting upon a bloody axis, we were systematically relegated to the bottom of society and painted as the worst of the worst. Dysfunctional, illiterate, drugs who could not function on our own, but had to be chained, warehoused, or be sent away to be controlled by the state.

We were separated from all that defined our character to be rebellious and our behavioral ways — thus, the raza with an

unrelenting fighting spirit for a better tomorrow was made a prime candidate for institutions throughout the country bound by honor we will always be. Non-Raza people are kicking back watching us kill each other so they can take over our barrios! For the love and loyalty of our barrios, Madres and our pride, young vatos and home girls think twice about the thing you get yourself into! Only we can stop the killing that take us six feet under, for no one else give a heck. The poverty and violence that we grow up in is to keep us hooked on dope and in the pinta so that non-Raza people can vulture into barrios and take over. All barrios are not negative, there's also positive ones that give back to the community.

Remember what happened to our ancestors. Vultures from across the ocean came and destroyed our world and forced us to believe in theirs, today, as you read this, it is still happening. When you watch TV, it tells you how to look, act, dance, talk and dress, and the sell outs buy into it, but the homeboys and homegirls don't fall for their BS. We borrow some of their chingaderas and make it into our own style, the barrio styles, which tells non-raza and sell outs that we, La Raza, are unique people and that our uniqueness must be respected! We should look up to our heroes. Our heroes died for:

- The liberation of our land from invaders and backstabbers
- The respect of our constumbres
- The better of La Raza

So homies, when we are fighting each other, we are disrespecting our heroes. Respect y pride are things that no one took away from them. And one more thing for the homeboys in California due to many children, Abuelitas, and innocent gente being killed by "Drive -Bys," the Raza has declared war on anybody involved in such a cowardly act. There is no excuse or explanations good enough to save you — you are automatically guilty and sentenced to deal with the consequences at the hands of your own gente — think about it.

Well Beat I am out, it was cool writing you. I'll be here waiting to write something for next time.

Veil

The veil on the mind has tired to bind divines grace
 For the tail on the spine is the kind that winds behind the waist

In as many times denied as it takes for the saints to gain applause
 For the narrow road will close if the "chose" weren't "called"

For if all that's small festers and porches on a stilt
 Then as a gauze will pause the pressure to support the fort it built

Of guilt has pride embrosed a quilt for the will of man alone
 To endorse the source of sin that twilled it hand sewn

For the sand along the tide has tried to find pace
 By way if it arrives through the eye of bribes gape

What waste of time to grind and grate to create a hedge of stone
 When bread alone broken has only fed its own

For the strong gender rooted adapts along the way
 With its bone limbs fruitless for it's inapt fractured faith

To add weight to the corks restraint will force the plank to widen
 It's naval chord cyphoned before it's form ripened

The sword before it lightens will forget it twice strong
 For the more the door widens aligns us to the throne

With a long stem grail to reach the realm of hells rhine
 For it shells bare skin where the nails held pine

We can tell this man's mind takes him on journeys that many of us have never been on. His writing is elegant in ways even we couldn't grasp at times, but what we gather from his first piece is incredible. However, we may be wrong... We want to say he's talking about a veil we put over our problems as if a mere veil is going to make them go away. Or it doesn't have to be just problems, but anything we put a veil over, maybe even over our own minds. Then he closes with a poem called, "Scribe," where he speaks of those writers who "got it" versus the ones who didn't. Or again, at least that's what we think. Well, he's writing from Calipatria State Prison in Calapatria, CA. Let us know what you think

Scribe

A source of good report insinuated with a nod
 That a feast of commons thieves say they ate with God

At odds over virtue and the validity of perhaps
 Confined in captivity until eventually it adapts

It acts out of nature is all it's suppose
 In relation to the called in response to the chose

It holds the load barely the stash of limelight
 Has one mans wrath ever been defined so polite

Has mad become the profile of the docile Sadducees
 Immune to its scrutiny when it's pruned of its leaves

Bereaved pleads of hope in the folds of old scars
 The seize of plated notes that corrodes in gold bar

At par subdivided to pry it's page gone
 By one they came in private to decide it's code song

"Have ear hear whispers" of undertone speech
 The cheer of deaf listeners amongst the ones reached

Picture Of You

I sit and stare at this picture of you
 Wondering if all these dreams will come true
 I'm in love with letters and a three by five photo
 Madly passionate about a woman I can't let go
 I spend my time dreaming, longing for one touch
 Anticipating and waiting, wanting you so much
 "Mami chula" you're here with me on this three by five.
 And the letters you send to me keep my hope alive.
 So when I get lonely, here is what I do.
 I read one of your letters and stare at this picture of you.

My Poetry

It comes from that place in the soul where tears form
 The voice of a heart broken by a 28-year storm
 Metaphors describe a character riddled with scars
 Battles fought, wars lost, living and dying behind bars
 I rather tell a story with a new tattoo
 Then waste time describing my pain to you
 It is the price I'm paying for the dreams I've sold
 The reason behind all the lies I've told
 Out there on the corner, avoiding street light
 Begin the story I live that I can never write
 It's living, it's beating, it's the lump in my throat
 All is calm on the horizon, yet I'm rocking the boat
 My poetry is simply my blood, my sweat, my tears,
 Combined to make ink, so I can write away these years.

PEDRO LEE NIEVES

Writing from the Jackson Correctional Institution in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, we bring back this once published writer who says he has three poems for the youth to read. And after we read them, we felt like they'd be really good reads. The first, titled "Will He," is a series of great questions that really put on a platform the generational cycle of incarceration. We think it's a brilliant poem. The second, "My Poetry," is an equally, if not more, brilliant poem about why he writes. We especially liked these two lines, "My poetry is simply my blood, my sweat, my tears, Combined to make ink, so I can write away these years." And then he concludes with a poem about who we're assuming is his girlfriend. He's a really good writer, but don't just take our word for it... Please...

Will He

Will he, remember that his daddy wasn't there?
 Will he, think that his daddy, didn't care?
 Will he, hate me for what I've done?
 Will he, be ashamed to be my son?
 Will he, grow up to be a good man?
 Will he, forgive me, if he can?
 Will he, believe anything I say?
 Will he, know I thought of him everyday?
 Will he, understand how sorry I am?
 Will he, say what I said, "I don't give a damn?"
 Will he, feel like I felt not knowing his dad?
 Will he, feel like he can't miss what he never had?
 Will he, realize his daddy grew up the same way?
 Will he, do the same thing to his son one day?

One Proper Choice

What's Up Wit' It?

Let me holla at you for a minute.

I'm not trying to gain respect through fear,
Even though I've been doin' it for years.

I want your respect and trust,
Something you'd give your friend
Or your first heart felt crush.

I try to stick to the realest,
What I know, so let me spill this

Life was never promised to be easy,
It comes with storms, the tempest is breezy.
So hard it'll knock you down again and again,
So let me unfold this prophecy to win.

It's kind of funny,

I'm real slow to let people in.

Trust is at an all time low,
But for some reason I'm feeling this flow.

A way to let it all out
And show what my game is all about.

Switched up so young in life,
Even though I'm stuck in the system,
We all know it's nothing nice
I used to laugh at the cross,

Thinkin' I was boss

I didn't have any spirit within
The devil saw me and straight grinned.

Alcohol on the daily,

Didn't faze me.

Multiple pills to binge,

Plus my pockets swolled from within.

Bandanas tied,

Homie hoo-ride

This is just a taste, throughout my writings

I'll show how my life was displaced.

When everything seemed lost,

Christ's cross was found,

The angels rejoiced when this boy made a choice.

It was two ways for me,

Bang it to the fullest or attempt to succeed.

I try to grasp where I'm goin',

But I know where I've been.

Jesus gave me the will to live again.

I may not be a stand up citizen

But I try

In this life you must survive.

There is no glory in these ways.

Reduced to barbarians in a cage

What a way to come of age

Stuck in the street code.

Silence is a mute mode.

So is this the way we all want to live?

I know I can't stand myself

And the things that I've did

Done — was life won?

Formed and wrought in the devil's melting pot.

Can we escape and make way for our true fate?

The angels rejoice over one proper choice.

*It's funny how when everything is on the
up and up you got mad folks around you,
but when the situation becomes critical
your caught by yourself.*

Writing from Fairfield, CA, we bring you a writer who's been really consistent lately. We've been looking through our stack of letters and for some reason his letters keep popping up, which is great because he has a whole lot of great things to say. This week, he speaks of "one proper choice," and that proper choice, according to him, is that he chose to find God. He then concludes with a piece and a poem about courage that's very telling. He had a childhood friend who moved out of the neighborhood and at the time he questioned his friend's motive. But now, in retrospect, he can see that his family made a wise decision and that his friend had to act on "real" courage, not the false of image of courage we all fall victim to every now and then. We appreciate this next writer's insights and we know you will too...

*The Beat
Without*

Courage

I got a visit from a long time friend a while back. It was a shocker to see him because I figured our roads had steered in opposite directions. My boys slide through on the regular, well sort of. Some keep in touch. The real ones do at least. It's funny how when everything is on the up and up you got mad folks around you, but when the situation becomes critical your caught by yourself.

Anyways, this boy of mine slide through. I had mixed emotions. Now, me and this boy was riders together. Digs, we went through it always together. Well, after a couple of years we began to split for various reasons. He ended up moving away to avoid the streets. We kept in contact, but we now lead two different lives. Plus, I couldn't grasp why he left what we worked so hard for. Now seeing him through the glass, I understand. Hard pill to swallow. When I saw him I was mad, angry at myself, happy envious and a million more feelings at once. But, I realized why he left and how he bettered himself by leaving.

I can't say I'm mad at him. I pray for him and others who have the courage to up and leave to move on to something better. That's something I thought I had. Courage, something better in life is what I wish for, hope for, pray for. It takes courage to make a change. It takes courage to be different. It takes courage to stand-alone. Do you have courage? Do I have courage?

I got a visit, it was a friend of mine.

I nearly cried, damn near brought a tear to my eye.

You can't think twice as life passes you by.

We may never know the answers to why?

Does everything happen for a reason?

Are we predestined to certain times in certain seasons?

What makes us who we are?

Is it the battles fought that wrought our life's lot?

Can we change where we're goin' and forget where we've been

Is it possible to live again?

You go your way and I'll go mine.

Life's plan. is it sent from the divine?

Who knows if our tracks will ever meet

All I know is our memories are sweet

To this friend of mine,

I pray your life is better than mine.

First Impression

Someone once said that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. A perfect example of how wrong first impressions can be, occurred in my college English class.

The wise people of Columbia State Community College decided they needed to send a good instructor to teach at one of their new prison college programs. I would be willing to bet that no one volunteered and the instructors were forced to draw straws. The loser had to teach here. It had to be the only way to get a thin, well-dressed, yuppie into this environment willingly. Our obviously overqualified instructors suddenly appeared in the class as if the "Romans" had just thrown him to the lions! I think I even seen a hand shove him in the back as he stumbled into the crowded classroom.

"Poor guy" were the only words that came to mind. Just from the look on his face, you could see his panicky thoughts, terrified images and misplaced fears scrambling over each other like rats.

The fact that he shows us more respect than we are accustomed to here, shows his discomfort with us. He is obviously so concerned about offending us that he is not using his usual teaching style. I hope that after a few more classes, his fears of becoming a hostage, and someone's wife will dissipate. It takes a special kind of courage to work here. If any of these people lived next door to me, I'd move!

I won't call our instructor afraid, but he is definitely apprehensive. Who could blame him? When you walk into our class, the first four faces in the front row would make Mike Tyson apologize and run for the front gate!

Each maniac is more dangerous-looking than the next. The most eye-catching of the group is the 350 lbs. one-eyed, White Aryan Brotherhood poster-child with the military haircut. Behind that racist image is a man who lives easily with a Black Muslim, constantly interacts with blacks and probably secretly listens to rap music. That's just "Stormin' Kuhbander."

Then there is Jeffery. Poor, confused, gentle man. Behind the carefully groomed, full goatee and sideburns is a man who stopped being a flaming homosexual as of last month. The instructor still doesn't know why everyone giggles when he mistakenly calls someone else in the class "Jeffery." The well-meaning Jeffery (formerly known as little Kim) is the only one in the institution that doesn't know he is still gay behind the beard. We still like him anyway.

Next, there is the very dark, big, black guy with the permanent scowl on face. He looks like a stereotypical, violent,

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression." We feel like those words are incredible and this next piece is just as, if not more, incredible. It's about a teacher from the outside going into prison to teach people there. There are obviously going to be first impressions flying around the room. Of course the teacher was apprehensive, but what we found most exciting about this piece is that the narrator gives us both the impression people might get of those who attended the class and then tells us who they actually are and what they're about. We find that a lot of times our first impressions of people are wrong, especially under such circumstances as incarceration. Well, he's writing from the Madison Correctional Institution in London, Ohio. Let us know what your first impressions are of him.

southern black man with the I.Q. of a cheese sandwich! Probably because he has very uneven, nappy hair. That looks like it had been combed with scissors! Not to mention the fact that he never takes his coat off? You have to wonder if he has an assault weapon under that coat? He looks so threatening that when he approached white people, they automatically raise both their hands in the air, robbery-style. I've had to stop myself once or twice from doing it as well.

Behind that serial-killer look, Crawford is just a big kid. A big kid who hasn't figured out that people judge you by your appearance whether you like it or not. He's harmless as long as he takes his meds... hopefully.

The fourth not-so-menacing figure in the front is "Hillbilly Jim." He looks at our instructor as if he has on a revealing mini-skirt. He is one slip-of the tongue away from telling our instructor he has a "pretty mouth." Despite his lust filled looks and leering appearance, his only ambition left in life is to catch the biggest fish to display at the county fair.

Finally, there is the intimidating-looking black gangster at the back of the class. He appears to be suspiciously watching the rest of the group for signs of weakness. The street-wise shameless, slacker has a far more unusual story than the rest. One would never suspect that this articulate thug has an I.Q. of 142, speaks a second language, reads 3 books a week for the past four years, and the biggest fear in his life is that he won't get out of prison in time to buy his daughter her first car as he promised.

In spite of this colorful cast of characters, our instructor didn't make a break for the door! He did seem to strategically stay within screaming distance of the hallway. We tried not to make any sudden moves that could give him a coronary! He did a good job and by the end of the class, his nervous stammering was barely noticeable. One can only hope that his experience doesn't drive him to drink. Very few people are what they appear to be. Too bad you never get a second chance to make a "First Impression..."

GREGORY VALDEZ

A Loving Friend Forever

People wake up and listen but not to the world of mankind a friend is coming to you with his heart in hand it has a lot to offer you so what is a loving friend to you is a Person or a Thing or a Relationship you do not understand of it like and dislikes to the nature of humans on this earth A friend gives you this and that but would not shed his blood for the friend I'm talking about or friend say I be there when you down and out but never really there or even if you need a bite to eat

But I do have a Loving Friend and not my loving friend will never love you without a bite to eat and more as well to come he will give things beyond your needs such as love, passion, and understanding for every direction you would need the coldest thing about you unless you leave

Writing from County Jail in Sacramento, CA, we bring you a man who's really into the meaning of friend. He sort of speaks in a puzzle where you have to piece the words in your mind to create the image. We don't know if it was his way of expressing it, or our lack of understanding his expression, but for some reason this next piece just didn't grab us like we think it should have. Maybe next time...

him but he will still be right there were you left him alone and standing in the cold but he will not freeze all he has to do is sneeze and he has a cool breeze not too hot or not too wet he control every you will need so don't take a false friendship who in need let Jesus be your need because he does have the power in deed a good wake up is like a shake up the earth crack and the rivers split and people will be crying indeed so do not be afraid because the time will rise like a thief in the night so be awake to see a friend you will be able to see a friend you will be able to see

Piercing — Bullet

Summer of 1993

The first degree

Homegirls and homeboys caught in the face of a sudden
 And totally unexpected physical danger
 Its sneaky like a ranger
 A homie dear uncle, anniversary celebration
 Nobody knew of this enemy awaiting action
 Suddenly, I heard cracking shots fired, invisibly,
 Homies dashed in the blind spots
 I feared for the boys, girls and tots
 Cracking sounds ceased, hearts pounding, nerves shaking
 For my deeds this was karma — winging
 And from my leg blood was seeping
 Couldn't see straight
 Had a deep hate
 The first thought I had was a question to God:
 Is this a punishment or curse?
 This was a critical hour, but somehow I got through
 another day
 Passed the night in mental anguish and agony
 Leg still wrapped in the homies thermal T
 Saying to myself "why me?"
 Didn't and couldn't go to the hospital, a few days passed
 Infection massed

It's not every day someone wakes up and decides to reevaluate their lives and try something different. In fact, it's a process that sometimes is too time-consuming to come up with on the fly. And many times serious things have to happen to us for us to change our minds in the first place. But whenever that "piercing bullet" gets through to us, it has an incredible impact on us. That's what the very wise Alex Shelton writes about this week. He's writing from Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, CA. Thank you for the insight. We look forward to your next work of art...

I didn't want to count 10 backwards in the E.R,
 Felt like I was a fish with hook in the mouth, flippin' and
 flappin'
 Lights out, eyes tappin'
 Woke up drowsy and cuffed to the bed, needle in my arm
 Pretty nurse moving around in a swarm
 K9s confirmed my three years parole
 But it didn't matter they had to let this "G" go,
 Told 'em I didn't know what they were talking about
 Two months later I was back in prison
 More experiences completely changed me
 Over the years I can say it now in all sincerity
 Without false modesty
 Without a sense
 Either of exaggeration.
 I have to call it Gods Presence
 Gang conversion experience

SHY BOY

Writing from San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, CA, we give you a man who feels fortunate to have graced the pages of our newsletter. This week he sends us a poem that really speaks to the family cycle of incarceration. First, wondering where his dad was all these years and then getting incarcerated himself, leaving his "lil' man" behind. He hopes his son can break the cycle and as we got to the end we found ourselves hoping for the same. It's a sad and tragic tale many of us have experienced or are going to experience. So, let's be enlightened by the thoughts of this next writer...

*Woke up drowsy and cuffed to the bed,
 needle in my arm
 Pretty nurse moving around in a swarm
 K9s confirmed my three years parole
 But it didn't matter
 they had to let this "G" go*

Pops

When I was growin' up
 Pop's was gon', so mom's had to step up...
 Dude was never there
 When we did talk it was mostly lies, boy how he lied.
 I was feelin' like nobody wanted me.
 I aint gon' lie... I cried.
 Mama had two kids, eleven years apart...
 She always showed us love
 And it was always from the heart
 I hated my pop's for years
 Wished ill upon him and his
 Somethin' like a hater.
 Through all these years
 I've come to learn somethin' greater...
 All these feelings that I harbored. Towards my father...
 Are probably the same feelings my own son harbors.
 I did exactly what I said I wouldn't do
 I hurt my little man.
 Fourteen years strong, I know it ain't cool.
 No matter what you'll always be my lil' man...
 If anyone can break the cycle, you can.
 You're a good kid... you deserved more.
 I'm sorry, lil' man

LIL' O

Writing from the California Training Facility in Soledad, CA, we bring you a man writing to his girl on the streets. He shares a "Love Of The Strongest" with her and hopefully she still feels the same way. There's not much we can say about this piece, but we hope he also sent it to her. Thank you for sharing...

Love Of The Strongest

Every morning I wake up in this
 Cold and sad place
 But before I open my eyes for the first time
 Each day the last thing I remember seeing is your sweet
 face!
 This is what truly makes
 My heart smile!
 Longing, yearning, and craving for the day
 To come when we can embrace!
 A new year is coming upon us
 And I hope that as the year goes on our love
 And friendship will grow stronger
 And that we are able to build that everlasting bond
 That only two amazing people like us share
 And to have the type of love that
 Can withstand any test of time
 And make it through the hardest
 Times only to come out stronger because
 We share a love of the strongest

The Light Facing The Dark Place

Jus suppose for a moment that you could speak with God and He would answer you back. Just suppose you could ask him "WHY?"

My whole life or as far back as I can remember I've wondered what is beyond this reality. When I was about four or five years old, I used to wonder what came before there was the "here and now." I would go to this closet that was the darkest, quietest place in the whole house. It was so dark in there that when I closed the door after I was inside, stuffed a blanket in the bottom of the door, and sat with my back to it, I almost felt nothingness. And even though I knew I only needed to turn around, I still felt nothing.

That knowledge gave me my first visit of what it must be like to be GOD. That all He would have to do is face me from within His dark place. Because if He is the light everything around Him must be darkness.

This next writer has been our most consistent these past few issues. He always has a whole lot to say and normally we'd be annoyed by this much writing, but the ideas he shares are ones that forever keep our interest. This week, he sends us about ten pieces and they're all equally worth reading. We especially liked the first piece he sent us which details why he writes. It's not a task for him like it is for some, but more of a survival mechanism. Being a weekly publication, we can totally understand where he's coming from on that one. The rest of his work this week encompasses many thoughts and beliefs that we find intriguing. He talks about worry, sends a dedication to the girls unit in Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall, and even speaks about true friendship, or lack thereof. He also writes his own introduction: "My search for love and meaning in life had ended behind razor-wire fences. I had reached the bottom of the pit, with nowhere to look but up. That's when I turned my life over to God. In a prison cell, I heard and accepted the message of hope, found in Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. I began writing from my prison cell about me and the people around me and the things God was teaching me, I pray that you will enjoy reading them as much as I enjoyed writing them and that they will grip your hearts and minds." We couldn't have put it better. He's writing from Florida State Prison in Raiford, Florida.

The Beat Within

After reading The Beat Within, Volume 12.30. I was compelled to write. I need to commend and thank you for your weekly publication of writing. It is a blessing to read. I thank God for you share your wisdom with me. Life is a grand symphony in which we all play our individual parts. None of us can hear the whole, nor can we play all the parts. We only have to show up each day with the fullness of our being and willingness to use our instrument, to shape and time it into a form through which the voice of God can be heard.

I'm not perfect. I am confident that if I want freedom I must free my mind and soul and start not being a "prisoner" and start redefining what my situation is, I'ma use this as an opportunity to develop "my mind and soul" rather than sitting around. I have nothing to do, so I am going to study. I love to study and learn. Knowledge is the key to getting where I need to go. That is why I started to write. To save myself. I realized that no one could save me but myself. The prison authorities were uninterested and unable to help me. I had to seek out the truth and unravel the snarled web of my motivations. I had to find out who I am and what I could do to become the best of which I was capable. I learned that I had been taking the easy way out, running away from problems. I also learned that it is easier to do evil than it is to good. God, life and prison, show me it is time to straighten up and fly right. That is why I decided to concentrate on my writing and efforts in this area.

I was very familiar with the Shawn who came to prison, but that Shawn no longer exists. And the one I am now is in some ways a stranger to me. You may find this difficult to understand but it is very easy for one in prison to lose his sense of self. And if he has been undergoing all kinds of extreme, invaluable, and unregulated changes, then he ends up not knowing who he is.

Take the point of being attractive to women. You can easily see how a man can lose his arrogance or certainly on that point while in prison! When he's in the free world, he gets constant feedback on how he looks from the number of female heads he turns when he walks down the street. In prison he gets only hate stares and sour frowns. Years and years of bitter looks. Individuality is not nourished in prison, neither by the officials nor by the convicts. It is a deep hole out of which to climb. Anyway I am on a

mission. When I started writing, I never fooled myself into believing that this would be about just writing. I'm not a singer, I can't dance, I'm not a comedian so if I want to have a voice, writing is a great way to create that.

1. If money didn't matter, what would I do with my life?
I'd work with troubled teenagers in the inner city.
2. Beauty or brains?
Brains. Beauty fades.
3. What is my weapon if choice?
Humor. If you can make someone laugh, you can get their guard down.
4. What's my family's nickname for me?
My older sister never wanted me to get ahead of myself, so it was always like "come here cat face or cat eyes."
5. What's the fastest way to pick a fight with me?
Talk bad about my daughters.
6. What the last book I read?
Think and Grow Rich.
7. Name one thing that scares me?
My daughters die before I do.
8. What is the biggest mistake I've ever made?
I didn't pay attention to a female friend and she committed suicide.
9. If I could tell one person to shut up, who would it be?
My Baby-Mama. She thinks she knows everything.
10. Who would I kill for?
My family.
11. What's the greatest personal tragedy I ever experienced?
Losing my Mother.
12. By this time next year.
I hope to be free.

Staying Game — Conscious And 'Sucker Free'

There should be a way that you could duplicate a prison scenario on the street. A simulation that places a person in an environment that accurately conveys the experience of being incarcerated. To me, it's the only way someone can truthfully gauge the authenticity of the people in their lives.

Right now, most of you reading this are comfortable in the knowledge that the person you're sleeping with, the friend whose company you enjoy and the family you have faith in, are in your corner unconditionally. There's no doubt in your mind that if anything happens to you, these support groups will run to your aid immediately, regardless of the circumstances. But are you sure?

Can you say with absolute certainty that the people who claim to love you now, will still be around if an injury, illness, or unfortunate situation left you debilitated? We want to believe in the loyalty of those we hold dear to our hearts. But the reality is that we never know what anyone is truly made of until their feet are placed firmly into the fire.

It is only then, when our backs are against the wall and the bottom has fallen out from under our lives, do we see others for who they really are. Up until that point, we depend on blind faith, pledges of camaraderie and flattering pillow talk to determine the level of trust we should instill in the individuals who occupy our inner circle. Prisons test

these relationships to the fullest extreme. They're the only entities on earth that can place a level of strain on a commitment that will either break it completely or make it even stronger.

From the way people act when you're sent to one of these institutions, you would think you were eulogized rather than sentenced. The friends you thought you had suddenly develop amnesia as to your whereabouts. The women who acted as though she couldn't breathe without you, conveniently finds someone else to feed her oxygen. And as far as family is concerned, even they have propensity to leave you stranded when you need them the most.

This situation is unlike anything you could possibly imagine. But the saving grace (if that's what you want to call it) is that once you've gone through the betrayal, the backstabbing, and the double-crossing, you feel a certain sense of relief.

It is almost like going through a purification process. Those who weren't as thorough as you thought are exposed for what they truly are. While the rest of the pretenders and fakers, who you would have otherwise continued to maintain relationships with, fade off into memory.

What you're left with is a clean slate to start all over again. The game-consciousness you learn during the process allows you to stay "sucka-free" and more focused on the people who love you instead of the ones who abused the love you tried to give.

The 12 Laws Of Life

(Dedicated to the powerful girls in Juvenile Hall)

There's gonna be some stuff you gonna see that's gonna to make it hard to smile in the future, but through whatever you see, through all the rain and the pain, you gotta keep your sense of humor, you gotta be able to smile through all the rain and pain, remember to keep your head up.

1. No man is worth your tears, and the one who is, won't make you cry.
2. Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.
3. A true friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.
4. Never frown, even when you are sad, because you never know who is falling in love with your smile.
5. To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.
6. Don't waste your time on a man, who isn't willing to waste his time on you.
7. Maybe God wants you to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one, so that when you finally meet the person, you will know how to be grateful.
8. There's always going to be people that hurt you so what you have to do is keep on trusting and just be more careful about who you trust next time around.
9. Don't try so hard, the best things come when you least expect them to.
10. Make yourself a better person and know who you are before you try and know someone else and expect them to know you.
11. The worst way to miss someone is to be sitting right beside them knowing you can't have them.
12. Don't cry because it is over, smile because it happened.

Remember: Whatever happens, happens for a reason. Lastly true friends: How many people actually have many true friends? Hardly anyone I know! But some of us have all right friends and good friends!

Ready To Unfold

Stand back and watch me. I'm getting ready to unfold!

I've decided to let my spirit go free I'm ready to
 Become the man I was meant to be. I've always been
 somebody's

Son, Father and now it's time for me to take charge
 Of my life. I've been pondering all this time trying to
 decide

Just who I am. At first I thought it depended on whether
 I had a good woman. Then I had the notion that simply
 Just because others had more seniority, they could
 decide

Who I was. I played all the roles that were expected and I
 Seldom asked why I've had my wings closed up, but now

I'm ready to fly. I've been awakened and I finally see
 The light. I'm about to make some changes and set a few
 Things right. With my new attitude and the knowledge I
 Possess I may create a whole new world order and
 Clean up all this mess. Stand back and watch me.

I'm getting ready to unfold!

Educated

A college diploma does not mean you are educated. Quite the contrary. It means that people have been opened up to a perpetual state of ignorance and thus a lifelong hunger for more good thoughts, more ideas, more knowledge, more challenges, more of everything

Some of the dumbest people I know went to great prestigious colleges and universities. They walked across a stage, took diploma in hot little hand, pronounced themselves well-educated and proceeded never to read another book, entertain another fresh idea or tax their minds in any way beyond the minimum limits required to make a living or make it socially, or both.

WHY?

How long, O Lord; must I call for help, But you do not listen? Or cry to you, "violence!" but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before; there is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is prevailed. (Habakkuk 1: 2-4).

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then so you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? (Habakkuk 1: 13)

Have you been waiting on God for an answer? Have you been asking God questions about your life and the society in which we live? Have you, like the prophet Habakkuk, become perplexed, distraught, saddened, grieved, and even angered at the injustices of today? What about the plight of the poor, the pain of the oppressed, the continual wickedness of mankind, and the hypocrisy and complacency of the church? Have you cried in the midnight hour and asked God, "How long?" Have you thought, like Habakkuk, that maybe God just was not listening? Are there problems in your life left unresolved, questions unanswered? Have you considered entering into the courtroom of the kingdom of God to ask, "God, your honor, Why? What's happening in my life?"

"Lord, I don't mean to intrude on your busy schedule, but if you would please just reveal to me the method to this madness. Your master plan be a divine strategy." God says, wait on me, I'm going to answer you. I'm going to speak to you. I'm going to talk to you. I'm going to show you my glory and my power. Why is not necessarily a rebellious attempt to question Gods authority? Why is just wanting to understand and be at one with Gods reasoning? Why is the children of Israel knowing the acts of God but Moses knowing the ways his heart and reasoning God? Why is a desire for a divine impartation and revelation from God, wanting his mind to be in you, which is the mind of Christ?

Why is saying, "God, I want to be a clone of your wisdom.

I want to draw from your spiritual and intellectual resources until your thoughts become my thoughts, and your ways become my ideas. I want a supernatural exchange."

God I'm not questioning your right or ability to rule or govern, but show me the strategy. Show me your plan and purpose for my life. Let me see the blueprint before the building is built. Let me see the plan before the product is manufactured. I just want to know what I shall be when I get through crying, suffering, and laboring in turmoil and confusion. Every now and then, tell me and remind me how it's going to end!

You don't feel a great amount of emotional intensity when you read the word Why or speak the word Why. But when a sincere, heartfelt, passion filled Why comes out of one's heart, it is often the consequence of a certain amount of bewilderment and perplexity. It comes from one who has become distraught, and discouraged. One that says, I've reached the end of my rope. I've come to the end of my reasoning and can't understand why. Why must I suffer? Why must I cry? Why must I keep reaching out to people who hurt me? Why am I misunderstood? Why do I keep going through the same things again and again and again? Why do I keep going through periods of prolonged confusion? I'm not saying I'm going to quit or I'm going to back slide. I'm not getting ready to throw in the towel, surrender to the temptation and the pressure of Satan. But God, I'm on my knees and I just want to know why? Why do the wicked seem to prosper over the righteous? Why do the hypocrites seem to get all the blessing, and the real saints go without? Why are the anointed persecuted? Why does there seem to be no justice? Why does the vision tarry? This is an emergency! It's an S.O.S. It's a 911. Lord, I heard a breakthrough right now; not tomorrow, not next week, next month, or next year. Lord, I need it now!

Why is the blessing delayed? Why must I wait? Why do the heathens rage? Great! God! Why is there so much hoopla going on in my life? Why do the people imagine vain things? They just make up things, or come up with strange things. Am I in the right place at the wrong time, or the wrong place at the right time? Lord, what's up? Why is everybody tripping on me? Why, why, why, why, why?

Why is the blessing delayed? Why must I wait? Why do the heathens rage? Great! God! Why is there so much hoopla going on in my life?

Lock In

I don't want to suffer
 From
 Post traumatic slave syndrome
 And
 Be enraged when freed
 From this cage
 I don't want to ease
 My pain with
 Novocain, methane or cocaine
 More stressing
 Unanswered questions
 People dying
 Unprotected sexing
 And

Aids killing at a rapid pace.
 Pleading for deliverance and guidance
 Economic classes on Tuesday
 Foreign language on Wednesdays
 Learning from my Hispanic and Latino
 Brothers
 Amor paz y unidad
 On Thursdays its Creative Writing
 Now I have "Lifers"
 Teaching me about
 Stocks, bonds, marketing
 Claim, proof, connection
 I don't want to suffer
 From post-traumatic silly syndrome
 When I'm free from this cage
 And be enraged.

How To Eliminate Worry

Worry is a negative state of mind, which causes anxiety, distress and uneasiness. It works slowly but persistently, destroying your initiative self-confidence, and reasoning faculty.

Worry is a form of continuous fear caused by indecision or uncertainty with respect to the outcome of a particular situation, event or circumstance. It is a very real negative force, which consumes and destroys all who come under its influence. Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system. More people die from worry than from overwork. When your mind is filled with fear and worry, a negative vibration is transmitted. This vibration passes through your attitude to the minds of all who experience your presence. To eliminate worry, you must change your attitude towards its cause.

-Eliminating Worry-

The first and most important step towards eliminating worry is to kill the worry habit by making a blanket decision that nothing in life is worth the price of worry. This general decision symbolizes, in your own mind, a commitment not to yield to the pangs of worry, no matter what. The second step is to change your attitude by changing your thinking and feelings of indecision, fear and doubt with positive thoughts and feelings based on understanding, faith and courage. The third step to eliminating worry is to practice the following seven points formula for eliminating worry from your life.

The Seven Points Formula For Eliminating Worry

1. Realize that most of the things you worry about will not happen.

"My life has been filled with terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened."

2. Determine the worst possible outcome of the situation you are worrying about.

Once you know the worst that can happen, you can then face it.

3. Resolve to accept the worst, if it happens.

4. Proceed to improve upon the worst by concentrating on the positive aspects of the situation.

You can pierce through vision and appearance created by fear, to truth revealed by understanding and self-confidence. Very often, what appears to be an invincible monster of negativity, upon closer inspection, becomes a coward whose only source of strength is darkness and fear.

5. Review your life experience, especially those which worried for you in the past.

Concentrate on lessons you have learned which can be helpful in resolving the current situation. Look for instances in which you overcame some obstacles, or complete an important assignment. Each success builds your faith in yourself and in your abilities.

6. Practice living one day at a time.

Live in daylight compartments. Forget yesterday's failures and tomorrow's possibilities for success. Concentrate on doing everything you can today to make tomorrow the way you want it to be.

7. Don't cross the bridge until you get there.

Take care of today; tomorrow will take care of itself. Don't waste your energies dealing with situations which may arise in the future. Taking good care of the present will often resolve or dissolve potential future situations automatically.

Something About Love

What can I tell anybody about love? Not very much... As love has not been very good to me. Them too, maybe its me that has not been good to love.

Even family — love is an effort. You have to put something in to receive. But my real point is that everybody on some level wants to be loved. It may not last forever as we would like it to, as I have loved many people and animals as well as objects. People have left me behind, dogs have died, and cars have broken down. So always start with the one you see in the mirror.

A Wing And A Prayer

There was once a stranger passing through a small country town and he ran into this farmer, whom was standing in his field feeding his chickens. The stranger told the farmer that he would gladly help out around the farm for the rest of the day for a little breakfast. Well, the farmer agreed and the two men enjoyed the day together. The stranger woke just before dawn and left an egg and a note at the farmer's door. The stranger left the town and was never seen or heard from again. When the farmer woke up and saw the egg he was mighty surprised. He had an idea where the egg came from so he smiled to himself and began to read the letter. The letter was very simple it simply said "This is a special egg please don't eat it. Oh, thanks for everything." From there the farmer took the egg to the hen house and left it to be hatch.

Around two to three weeks later the egg hatched. It wasn't the prettiest chicken, but it would do just fine. Well, about two and a half months later the farmer's brother came into town to spend a couple weeks with him and he saw an eagle only in the yard chasing like the chickens. He started throwing rocks at the eagle, but the eagle only ran and hid with the chickens. So the farmer's brother ran to tell his brother what he had seen. When the farmer finally came out he wasn't a bit surprised that his city-boy brother had thought that rare African chicken was an eagle. The brothers argued over what the bird was for a long time, until they made a bet. The farmer would have to move to the city for two weeks if he lost and if the farmer's brother lost he would move back to the farm for good.

So they took the bird to the top of this great mountain and let him out of the cage to see if he would fly, but the bird wouldn't fly. The farmer began to laugh as he reminded him that this bird was no eagle but just an everyday chicken. The farmer's brother threw the bird off the mountain top and began screaming "Fly eagle! Fly eagle!" The bird wouldn't fly. The farmer was certain that his brother had really gone too far this time, couldn't he see that the bird didn't fly because it couldn't fly. The farmer felt sorry for the chicken, but the farmer's brother just kept screaming and yelling, "Fly, you're an eagle... You're an eagle!" When the bird was just about to hit the ground he spread his wings and the wind raced up under them and the bird knew he was no longer a chicken... he was an EAGLE!!!

Sometimes we act like chickens because we hang with chickens, but we were really meant to be EAGLES. What are you? Are you a king or a sucker?

I believe in the children of the future... we must teach them well and let them lead the way and pray that God shows them all the wonders of life!

Life is a grand symphony in which we all play our individual parts. None of us can hear the whole, nor can we play all the parts. We only have to show up each day with the fullness of our being and willingness to use our instrument, to shape and time it into a form through which the voice of God can be heard.

read the rest of Shawn Montgomery's BWO piece on page 64

